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AIRAY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

AND

CARTWRIGHT ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

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LECTURES

UPON THE WHOLE

EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS,

DELIVERED IN ST PETER'S CHURCH IN OXFORD.

BY THE REVEREND AND FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST
HENRY AIRAY, DOCTOR OF DIVINITY,
AND LATE PROVOST OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

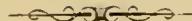


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HENRY AIRAY, D.D.



EVERY churchyard furnishes proofs how very lightly the world regards the "Saered" Memorials which surviving love inscribes over its dead. Decay and neglect soon tell of the survivor's death also—the heart later stilled laid beside the earlier stilled—and at last, the tender falsehoods of the epitaph all erased, and the grave level, and the human dust gone to dust, it is hard to recover more than, perchance, an ill-spelled entry of burial by the Parish Clerk. This applies to names that once were famous. It has been found so, with emphasis, in our endeavours to shed a little light on the long-forgotten Worthy whose book, after fully two centuries, is for the first time reprinted.

The old Greeks were wont to say, that he was the best shoemaker who, *out of the leather given him*, made the best possible pair of shoes. Now of 'leather,' from which to construct a 'Life' of Henry Airay, there is not so much as had sufficed for slippers in the wonderland of Fairy or of Lilliput. After an amount of search and research utterly disproportioned to the result, there remains very little indeed to record. The man is still a potent *force*, for his book lives. It abides, and he in it holds living influence over nineteenth century minds, that still treasure his wise and holy words. But 'decay's effacing fingers' have long swept away what must have been once pleasant memories of a very lovely, and meek, and Christianly intrepid soul.

Anthony a-Wood informs us that our Worthy was born 'in Westmoreland;*' and here a biographer's difficulties begin. The county is somewhat wide and many-parished, and the 'Registers' singularly fragmentary. We have come upon two or three families of the name in Westmoreland. First of all, paying a pilgrim visit to our Commentator's old Church of 'Charlton' (formerly Charleton in Otmore), nine miles or thereby from Oxford,—about which more in the sequel,—we found a mural monument of a Westmoreland Airay on the north side of the altar. Here is the antique inscription, well worthy of being printed :

* *Athenæ Oxonienses*, edition by Bliss, Vol. ii. page 177.

POSTERIS
ET ÆTERNITATI
SACRŪ

D^os Adamus AIRAY natvs in parochiâ de
BARTON in agro Westmorlandiae
Mart. XV · CLO · CI · LXXXIII
Coll. Reg. Oxon. Socius electus Mart. 26 1613.
Aulæ Edmundi principalis Mart. 9. 1631.
S.S. Theol. Doctor Jul. 10. 1637.
Rector hujus ecclesie Anno 1643.
Tandem
Animo maturus et ævo, fatis cessit
Dec. 15. 1658 et in Domino hic infrā
placide obdormiscit
Patruo optimo posuit mæstus nepos
Christ. Airay.

From this we learn that Adam Airay was a native of the ‘Parish of Barton, *Westmoreland*,’ and, from the *Athenæ Oxonienses* it is known that his nephew ‘Christopher,’ who placed the stone, was born at ‘Wilford,’ in the same county. A recent Rector of Charlton suggested to us that, as Adam Airay was certainly a near relative of Dr Henry, Barton might be assumed to have been his birth-place also.* But why Barton rather than Wilford? In neither of these Parishes is the Register sufficiently ancient to decide. Out of the wreck of that of the former, its present excellent incumbent (Rev. G. C. Hodgson) has culled for us these later entries of Airay names:—

Thomas Airey of High Winder, buried Sept. 20th A.D. 1692.

Barbary Airey of High Winder, buried Nov. 18th A.D. 1692.

John Airey, son of Christopher Airey, baptized May 2d 1689.

Then, on an older fragment, there are some verses bearing the signature of, probably, the above ‘Barbary Airey.’ Only a couplet is legible:—

‘What man can bear a loftie gaile
When fortune frowns and friends doo faile.’

The orthography of the name is changed by a vowel in these entries: but names in this respect were spelled very arbitrarily. We have found it written ‘Ayray,’ ‘Ayrey,’ ‘Ayry,’ ‘Airey,’ ‘Airy,’ and ‘Ary’; and even Dr Bliss, in his edition of Anthony a-Wood, while spelling above Christopher *Airay* in the little Memoir, spells it ‘*Airy*’ in the Index: so also in his additional note concerning our Airay†—who, it may be remarked, adhered throughout to the spelling ‘Airay,’ such being his signature to a manuscript document relating to certain properties purchased by him from a Henry Horsley, three months before his death, which is in our collection.

It seems impossible to trace precisely the connection of these earlier and later Barton Airays with one another, or with our Doctor. But a living representative of them informs us, that though they and the Commentator were certainly of the same stock, not Barton, but

* Our correspondent was the late accomplished Rev. H. Gough, who, in 1859, did all he could to obtain information for us; and we have to acknowledge like kindness on the part of his successor, the Rev. T. W. Falcon, who, besides other things, sends the following extract from his

Parish Register: ‘Adam Ary, doctor of divinitie, parson of Charlton was buried the 21 daye of desember 1658,’ adding, ‘This, one hopes, was written by the Parish Clerk.’ Cf. *ante*.

† Vol. iii. (Index), and Vol. ii. p. 178.

Kentmere, near Windermere, was his birth-place ;* and there, indeed, the name is found surviving under various modifications about Selside, and Keswick, and Kendal. One little fact seems to confirm the family tradition, and to guide us to his father, and probably an elder brother, in this region of Westmoreland. From various sources we learn that Bernard Gilpin, the apostle of the north, and himself a native of Westmoreland, was the patron and friend of Dr Henry Airay, as will fall to be noticed immediately. Is the origin, then, of his interest in him to be primarily explained by the circumstance that his father was the ‘favourite servant’ in the Rectory of Houghton ? In the well-known ‘Life’ of Bernard Gilpin, it is recorded that when this venerable man was making preparations for martyrdom,—a vengeful message having reached him from Bishop Bonner,—he ‘received the account with great composure ; and immediately after called up William Airay, a favourite domestic, who had long served him as his almoner and steward.’† From the great kindness shewn to our Airay by Gilpin, and from the vicinity of Kentmere to the ‘Rectory,’ it does not appear to be hazarding much to assume this ‘William Airay’ to have been his father, and that tradition is right in assigning Kentmere, near Windermere, as his birth-place—the latter, or rather both, most fortunate for him, bringing him as they did under the vigilant eye and benignant care of one who, more than most, wears meetly the august name of ‘Apostle.’

It needeth not that here should be narrated the many self-denying labours of Bernard Gilpin ; but having thus more definitely localised the birth-place and parentage of Dr Airay, it is to be observed that his humble origin made him a fit object of the good man’s peculiar bounty. Among the chief of his philanthropic deeds, was the erection and endowment of a School in his Parish ; and his biographer observes, ‘The effects of his endowment were very quickly seen. His school was no sooner opened than it began to flourish, and to afford the agreeable prospect of a succeeding generation rising above the ignorance and errors of their forefathers ;’ and adds, ‘That such might be its effects, no care on his part was wanting. He not only placed able masters in his school, whom he procured from Oxford, but he likewise constantly inspected it himself. And that encouragement might quicken the application of his boys, he always took particular notice of the most forward ; he would call them his own scholars, and would send for them often into his study, and there instruct them himself ;’ and, still further, ‘One method used by him to fill his school was a little singular. Whenever he met a poor boy upon the road, he would make trial of his capacity by a few questions, and if he found it such as pleased him, he would provide for his education. Nor did his care end here. From his school he sent several to the Universities, where he maintained them wholly at his own expense. To others who were in circumstances to do something for themselves, he would give the farther assistance they needed ; by which means he induced many parents to allow their children a liberal education, who otherwise would not have done it.’‡

In accord with all this, two of the ‘poor boys,’ who were ‘scholars’ of this man,—so far ahead of his age in well nigh every educational and religious movement,—and also of those whom he ‘sent to the Universities,’ were our Henry, and a Ewan or Evan Airay, in all probability a brother. They were ‘educated in grammatical learning’ at the School, and were in attendance at Oxford when Gilpin lay a-dying. His ‘will’ shews that he carefully

* Rev. William Airey, Bramley Vicarage, Basingstoke, Hampshire.

Prebendary of Salisbury. With an Introductory Essay by Edward Irving. 1824. P. 123.

† The Life of Bernard Gilpin. By William Gilpin, M.A.,

‡ As before, p. 138.

provided for their further education. Thus runs one clause: 'All the rest of my goods and chattels I will that they be divided into two equal parts, and the one of them to be given to the poor of Houghton, the other to scholars and students in Oxford, whose names are Ric. Wharton, Ste. Coperthwait, Geo. Carleton, Ralph Ironside, *Ewan Ayray*, Will. Cayrus, *Hen. Ayray*, Fr. Reisely, and Tho. Collins. These, I will, be relieved as mine executors shall see needful, a year, two, or three, as the sum will arise.' *

It is but to a lowly parentage and to straitened circumstances we have traced Henry Airay; and yet to have been son of the '*favourite domestic*' of Bernard Gilpin, is an honour by which he will be remembered more enduringly and tenderly than if the Herald had blazoned his pedigree with a hundred descents. Very quaintly and well has the thing been put of a very different man in similar humble case. 'Granting,' says Heylin of Laud, 'that he had been born of as poor and obscure parents as those authors make him, yet must it needs add to the commendation of his parts and industry, who, from so mean and low a birth, had raised himself into such an eminent height of power and glory. The greatest rivers many times have the smallest fountains, such as can hardly be found out, and being found out, as hardly quit the cost of the discovery; and yet by long running, and holding on, and constant and continual course, they become large, navigable, and of great benefit unto the public. Whereas some families may be compared to the pyramids of Egypt, which, being built on great foundations, grow narrower and narrower by degrees, until at last they end in a small *conus*, in a point, in nothing. For if we look into the stories of the times foregoing, we shall find that poor and obscure cottages bred commanders to the camp, judges unto the seats of justice, counsellors to the State, peers to the Realm, and kings themselves unto the throne, as well as prelates to the Church.' †

From the *Athenæ* we gather the details of Airay's college attendance. He was 'sent,' says Wood, 'to St Edmund's Hall in 1579, aged nineteen, or thereabouts,' as a little later, to Cambridge, Mr Knewstubs sent Master Richard Sibbes. 'Soon after,' he continues, 'our author, Airay, was translated to Queen's College, where he became *pauper puer seriens*; that is, a poor serving child that waits on the Fellows in the common-hall at meals, and in their chambers, and do other servile work about the college.'

This entrance as *pauper puer seriens* confirms our supposition that William Airay, the '*domestic*' of Gilpin, was his father; while his transference to Queen's is probably to be explained by its having been Gilpin's own College, as well as by his Westmoreland origin giving him a claim to the benefit of Eaglesfield's foundation therein—a claim which has been extinguished only within a few years by Her Majesty's Commissioners. Jeremy Taylor was also a '*pauper scholaris*', and very many others, whose names are the glory of their respective Colleges.

He proceeded B.A. on June 19. 1583, and 'after he was bachelor's standing in 1583, he was made *pauper puer*, or *tabardus*, or *tabardarius*, that is, a tabarder or tabitter (so called because anciently they wore coats, or upper gowns, much according to the fashion of those belonging to heralds):' 'which servile work belonging to *pauper puer seriens*, when undergraduates, all are to undergo before they can be Fellows.' ‡ This 'servile work' the *pauper puer* continued to perform within the last sixty or seventy years. On June 15. 1586, he passed M.A.; B.D. in 1594; and D.D. on June 17. 1600; all in Queen's College. 'About

* As before, p. 219.

† Life of Laud, lib. i. p. 47, edition 1668, folio.

‡ Wood, as before, p. 177, 178.

the time he was ‘master’ (1586) he entered holy orders, and became a frequent and zealous preacher in the University, particularly in the church of St Peter, in the East, joining to the Queen’s College.* His ‘Commentary,’ now reprinted, is a specimen of his preaching in this Church, and so of his fiery denunciation of popery, and his fearless enunciation of that Calvinism, which Oxford, in common with all England, prized then.

In 1598, he was chosen Provost of his College, and in 1606 was Vice-Chancellor of the University, wherein, ‘as always before, he shewed himself a zealous Calvinist, and a great maintainer of such that were of his mind.’† In the discharge of his Vice-Chancellorship, he came into conflict with Land, who even thus early was manifesting his Romish tendencies. In the Archbishop’s ‘Diary’—as odd a medley as ever bore the name—is this entry, under 1606, ‘The quarrel Dr Ayry picked with me about my Sermon at St Mary’s, Octob. 21. 1606.’ Dr Airay had himself published a ‘Treatise on Bowing at the Name of Jesus,’ in which he condemned the practice. We have failed, as Anthony a-Wood long before us, to discover a copy of this ‘Treatise.’‡ The subject, however, is discussed in the Commentary on the Philippians (see p. 130); and the views of the author are so moderate and so little ‘puritanical’ that it is difficult to see that they should have been offensive even to Laud. ‘The business,’ we learn from the *Fasti*, ‘being bandied to and fro for several weeks, Mr Laud cleared himself so much that he avoided a public recantation in the Convocation, which most of the Heads of Houses and Doctors intended to be done; yet such was the report that they raised upon him, as if he was a Papist, or at least very popishly affected, that it was a scandal for any person to be seen in his company, or to give him the usual compliment, or time of the day, as he passed the streets. Many were the censures that then passed upon him as a busy and pragmatical person, and much upon that account did he at present suffer.’§ It is due to the memory of Laud to recall that, in his ‘Marginal Notes on Prynne’s Breviate’—that terrible invective—he wrote thus, ‘l. 12. Dr Ayry questioned him for a Sermon, &c., [and upon full hearing, absolv’d me in all particulars.]’ Moreover, it must not be forgotten that long subsequently, in reprimanding the Provost of Queen’s for a precipitate election of Adam Airay as Principal of St Edmund’s Hall, there occurs this not unkindly allusion to his old departed ‘quarreler,’—‘Was it not that I so far tender the memory of Dr Ayry, I would resolutely say, This man whom you have chosen should never be Principal.’¶ A sorcer trial than this ‘quarrel’ with Land came upon Airay immediately thereafter. His beloved friend and associate, Dr John Rainolds, died May 21st 1607, and the Vice-Chancellor preached his funeral sermon, which it is pity has not been preserved to us.**

As stated in the outset of our brief Memoir, Airay held the living of Charlton. The sequestered Church, a fine specimen of thirteenth century architecture, remains very much to-day as it was when, two centuries ago and upwards, its saintly Rector crossed by what must then have been a mere bridle-path from Oxford to deliver his fervid ‘sermons.’ It is an attractive place. The tall perpendicular tower rises, venerably grey, from a little elevation of bared rock in the middle of a wide plain. Adjoining, on the south, is the Otmoor (spelled

* Wood, as before, p. 177, 178.

† *Ibid.* 178.

‡ Laud’s Works, edition in Anglo-Catholic Library. Vol. iii. p. 133, 262; v. 6; vi. 295.

§ Wood’s *Fasti*, or Annals ad. en. 1606, pp. 289, 290 as quoted in Laud below.

¶ There is no copy of the above ‘Treatise,’ or tract, on

‘Bowing at the Name of Jesus,’ in any of the great libraries of London, Oxford, or Cambridge. Not even in his own College of Queen’s is it found. It were much to be wished that a copy were recovered. The literature of the question is curious, and little known.

** Life of Rainolds in Brook’s Puritans, Vol. ii page 180.

formerly Otmore), now enclosed, but in Airay's time a swamp of three thousand acres, that afforded pasture in summer, and a haunt for innumerable wild fowl in winter. The Church is worthy of a visit still, if there were no more than its almost unique rood-screen, of the fifteenth century, which has never been 'restored,' nor meddled with, but still shews the original gilding, and bright red and blue.

It was a piece of unselfish heroism on the part of our 'Commentator' to accept the presentation to Charlton. He knew that he should thereby be involved in a costly litigation because of circumstances: nevertheless he threw himself into the struggle. The whole story is told by himself in his posthumous tractate 'touching his suit in law for the Rectory of Charlton,' 1621. It lacks general interest now, but, as we have said, exhibits his public spirit and affection for his College in a striking light. We chanced upon a copy of the old tract in the British Museum Library,—a copy having certain interesting manuscript notes, and a printed 'Appendix,' not always added,—and without entering into very minute details, a few facts may be indicated, more especially as the good man, as well as his editor, Potter, was holily jealous to set himself right, and 'to satisfy others' in regard to the 'tedious suit in law,' and in his own words, 'of my ministry, my degree, my service, my place of government.'

The 'Suit' had been carried from Court to Court, and the point of the case was, whether a certain lease were valid, said lease being for a very long term of years, and granting away the tithes and other endowments to a lay impropriator, to the injury of the incumbent, who was only allowed £20, and that not regularly paid. One clergyman was, in fact, starved, and another compelled to resign, when Airay flung himself into the breach, having been indeed appointed by Queen's College (to which the right of presentation still belongs, having been purchased from Henry VIII.) on purpose that he, by his weight of character and influence, might rend the prey from the spoiler. The lay-spoiler fought the battle with desperate tenacity; and his venerable opponent lamented throughout the necessity of his position, but he continued his attack and defence (as both parties were plaintiffs and defendants) until his death, in 1616. The 'cause' was finally settled in favour of Airay; and, standing so high as he did in the opinion of the religious world, certain persons professed themselves scandalized that so great a saint should have so far dishonoured his profession as to plunge into litigation. It was the clamour of the detected and exposed plunderer; and it needed not Potter's testimony to accredit the assurance of Airay himself, that in all he did he was moved by no personal views, but, as he expresses himself, 'out of compassion for the state of the people where the benefice is,' and 'of regard' to his 'own duty to the College,' and 'after much deliberation with very many skilful in the law, and of conscience with sundry reverend and judicious divines.' From the manuscript notes in the British Museum copy of the tractate, it would appear that the 'suit' caused a great stir and debates in many Courts. The practical result, as a recent Rector of Charlton wrote us, was, 'the Incumbent got his own; and now his successors are much better off than most of their brethren—thanks to the worthy Dr Airay.* Such 'leases' as that of Charlton, which so troubled our worthy friend, were rendered illegal by 13 Elizabeth, and one reads half in wonder and half in sorrow the strenuous 'Vindication' deemed necessary by Airay and his editor, Potter. This notice of the matter may be fitly closed by a few sentences indicative thereof, and which are interesting from the personal tribute they carry. Says Potter, in explaining in a 'Preface' the design of the publication, 'Seeing by many his religious friends, I

* The late Mr Gough, as before.

understand he cannot yet rest quietly in his grave, this cavil being often upon occasion and odiously renewed, cast like a dead fly to corrupt the sweet ointment of his blessed memory, and raised as a thick vapour to obscure the lustre of his good name, I cannot, without irreparable and palpable injury, forbear to put forth his own shield for protecting of his guiltless name, which lies bleeding under the merciless strokes of intemperate tongues, whereof some, I fear, aim through his sides at the disgrace of religion;’ and again, ‘I publish this tract in his own words without the least alteration; the author for his integrity was generally and justly reverenced.’*

This is really all that we have been able to bring together of interest concerning the author of this reprinted ‘Commentary’ on the ‘Epistle to the Philippians.’ His character as a man, as a preacher, as a divine, and as an important ‘ruler’ in the university, will be found portrayed in the ‘Epistle’ to ‘the Reader,’ prefixed thereto by Potter. The same tone of respect, if it ought not to be called veneration, appears in Hinde’s dedication of Rainolds’s ‘Obadiah’ in his lifetime.† Altogether, he must have been a fine specimen of the more cultured Puritans: strong with the strength of a true manhood, but softened with the shyness of woman; full of all tender charities, but bold for the truth; of brain in matter all compact, and not unvisited by speculation, yet beautifully modest before ‘The Word;’ gifted with ‘large utterance’ in thick-coming words, that catch sometimes a vanishing glow, as of the light sifting through opal clouds from the vision behind of Him who is at once their grand burden and informing Spirit; and throughout a robust common sense, that offers an admirable contrast to the shewy nothings of some of his contemporaries. You will look in vain in his ‘Commentary’ for erudite criticism or subtle exegesis in the modern sense: but there seems to us to be an instinctively true following up of the apostolic thoughts, a quick insight into their bearings and relative force, ingenious application to present need, and an uncommon fulness of positive *instruction*. Potter, in his ‘Epistle to the Reader,’ promises ‘other of his labours,’ if the ‘Commentary’ were ‘favourably accepted.’ It does not appear that anything more was given to the world, but ever since its publication his ‘Philippians’ has been an authority upon the Epistle, over-topping all other of the Puritans thereupon. For while Fergusson’s pregnant ‘Notes,’ and the volumes of Nathaniel Tucker, and of Lancelot Ridley have their own peculiar merits, they do not admit of comparison with the massive quarto of our author.

It remains to be stated that, having died on 6th October 1616, as Provost of Queen’s College, he was interred within its chapel; and the old building having been pulled down in 1714, his remains and monument were transferred to the new Chapel, where a somewhat peculiar portrait-effigies, representing him kneeling upon a cushion, and a globe at his left side, together with another brass plate bearing a laudatory inscription, may still be seen. Anthony a-Wood furnishes the following description of the whole, the Robinson commemorated along with him in the second, being his kindred-minded predecessor at Queen’s, so favourably known to posterity:‡—

* It may be noted here that in the B. M. copy, the MS. notes are by a Francis Hargreave, who gives some information about himself; and there is another autograph, ‘Jos. Smith,’ 1756, who mentions that he had bought the tract at sale of the library of Dr Richard Rawlinson. There are various references about the ‘suit,’ and names occurring. To the former may be added the following:—In the Second Report of the Deputy-Keeper of Records,

App. ii., 256, is a note to this effect, ‘Charlton super Otmore Hen. Ayray obtains a partial verdict against John Alcock, 4 Ja. I. March. iii. 48 d. 5 Ja. I. Trin. m. 32 to 33 d.’—*m* being an abridgment for skin, and *d* for back of skin in the roll of the Exchequer of Pleas.

† 4to, 1613.

‡ ‘History and Antiquities of the College and Halls in the University of Oxford.’ Ed. by Gutch. Pp. 116, 162.

On a brass plate, fixed to a black marble stone, laying in the middle of the chapel, is this:—

‘D. O. M. S.

Quod mortale habuit hic depositum
Donec Christo iterum adveniente
Resurgat

HENRICUS AIRAY

S. T. D. Collegii hujus per annos
sexdecim Praepositus.
Vivere desiit semper vieturus,
A. MDCLXVI, VI Id. Oct.
Reliquias viri
Reverendi ac optime de se
Meriti, hoc marmore
textit
Collegium.’

Arms on the aforesaid monument of Dr Airay, that is on the wall, are only Queen’s College Arms.

On another brass plate against the same wall [the south], is the picture of a man kneeling, with this in a scroll coming out of his mouth: ‘TE SEQUAR.’ Over his head are clouds, and Elijah ascending, &c., under which are these two verses:—

‘IGNIS ET EFFLANTES PURGARUNT AERA VENTI;
TRANSITUS IN COELUM PROMPTIOR INDE PATET.’

Under which is this inscription:—

‘MEMORIE VIRI SANCTITATE ET PRUDENTIA CLARISSIMI HENRICI AIRAY, S. THEOL. D. HUJUS COLLEGII PRAEPOSITI
VIGILATIS, REVERENDI ROBINSONI (UT ELLE ELISHA) SUCCESSORIS ET AEMULI, CHARISS. PATRUELIS: CHRISTOPHI POTTER, HUJUS
COLL. SOCI: HOC AMORIS, ET OBSERVATIE TESTIMONIU L. M. Q. POSUIT.

Non satis ELISHÆ est ELIE palla relieta,
Dum (lacet in Cœlum raptus) Amicus abest.
Tristis agit, queriturque amissum tururis instar
Consortem, ac moriens, TE SEQUAR, orbus, ait.
Splendeat ut mundo pietas imitabilis AIRYE,
In laudem Christi, hoc ære perennis erit.

MATH. v: 16.

Mortalitatem exuit anno 1616, 6^o Id^o Octo: nat^a an. 57, et hic sepul. alterū Messiae advētū exspectat.’

We have no information as to whether Airay ever married. The second inscription quoted above, intimates that Robinson was a cousin or near kinsman of Airay; but we have not been able to trace the connection. Neither, with all searching, have we been able to recover contemporary notices or allusions, anecdotes or letters.* His ‘Commentary’ is his one abiding monument. May it in this reprint inspire not a few of its readers with the same loyalty to Jesus Christ and His Word that marked its Author, who, ‘being dead, yet speaketh.’

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

KINROSS.

* Circumstances have at present prevented access to the Archives at Oxford, but I hope by and by to trace and copy Dr Airay’s ‘Will,’ when it or any new data may be given

in annotating the Dedication of Rainolds on ‘Obadiah,’ which it is proposed to include in these reprints.

LECTURES

ON THE WHOLE

EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

GEORGE, LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

HIS GRACE, PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND AND METROPOLITAN, AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE
PRIVY COUNCIL.

MOST REVEREND FATHER,

I COULD not presume to shroud this unpolished work under so high a patronage, if I did not hope that, as David loved lame Mephibosheth for his good father Jonathan, so your gracious favour to this author (now with God) would excuse and pardon, yea accept, this unperfected issue of his pains. These papers were never intended for the common view, being fitted in a plain and familiar style to a popular assembly, and therefore, I confess, not worthy of your acceptance. Yet I thought it injustice either to deprive the church of God of the benefit of his labours, or not to consecrate them to your Grace's hands, to whom the author was so much obliged. Your gracious countenance and love unto him, upon experience of his integrity, whereof you were long a witness and sometime a judge, did much comfort him amidst other occasions of grief and dejection. His only requital were holy prayers for your happiness, which he forgot not in the extremity of his last sickness, even then devoutly entreating the Lord for his blessing upon your person and government. Besides, your Grace is pleased to make your favours, as it were, hereditary, extending them in great measure to his successor, our present governor, and to our college; in which respect the best of all our labours are justly devoted

to your Grace, as a small discharge of our duty, if not rather as an acknowledgment of our obligation. These lectures, which now I present, are an exposition of Saint Paul's divine letter to the Philippians; an exposition, indeed, not suitable to the niceness and curiosity of our times, not elegant in words, and without all affectation, unless of plainness. But yet, lest I too much disparage the author and his work, if I be not mistaken, the naked and natural sense of this holy text is here so faithfully opened, and withal so powerfully and thoroughly applied, that, I doubt not, God's church and people may hence reap much benefit, which was the author's only aim in the exercise of his ministry, and shall be my chief comfort. Whatsoever it is, I humbly commend it to the blessing of God and to the use of his church, desiring to honour it with your Grace's name, whose patronage shall procure it respect from others. The Lord Jesus long preserve your Grace (after the joy of our hearts and the breath of our nostrils his most excellent Majesty), a great and sure friend of religion, and a worthy instrument of the welfare and peace of this holy and happy Church of England!

Your Grace's humble Orator,

CHRISTOPHER POTTER.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

IT was a just taxation of our times by grave and reverend Beza, *Dum tempora superiora cum nos-tris comparo, dicere consueri plus illas conscientie, scientia minus habuisse; nos contra scientia plus, conscientie minus habere:* the brains of men were never more stuffed, their tongues never more stirring, and yet their hearts never more empty, their hands never more idle. The disease of our forefathers was ignorance, ours is impiety; they were ill in the head, we are sick at the heart; they were blind, but (after their manner) devout, we are skilful and profane. No

age was ever blessed with such a light of knowledge, and yet none more fruitful of the works of darkness. The main reason undoubtedly why wisdom and holiness, learning and sanctity, are so usually now-a-days divorced, is because, as that heathen of old could complain, *disputare malumus quam vivere.* If men can argue and discourse of religion, it suffices; not one of a thousand thoroughly digests his knowledge, or turns the holy precepts of divinity into practice. Hence the world abounds with polemical books, which do not so much compose as breed contentions (though

I confess the fault is not ours, but our adversaries', whose perverseness will not be convicted even when they are convicted). But for practical divinity and lively devotion, it is an argument not more necessary than rare, handled but by few, and not by many regarded. Yet in this iniquity of times, wherein the affections of men had more need to be ordered than their judgments informed, in my opinion those treatises are of best service and use which reduce Christianity into action, and warm the heart and conscience with devotion. In this rank I account this commentary, which was a principal motive unto me, as we all owe ourselves unto the common good, not to smother a work so serviceable for this age, nor to bereave God's church of such a furtherance, especially being herein encouraged by sundry reverend and judicious.

A commentary perhaps not to the taste of many men in this age, whose nice palate doth loathe the dry manna, and can best relish the unsavoury saucers of Egypt. Others, who cannot fancy divinity unless she be wantonly trimmed up in the light colours of human art and eloquence, will here require elegance of words, and quarrel at his careless style. I answer, *mores non verba composuit, et animis dixit non auribus*, the scope of his labours was his auditors' instruction, not his own applause, nor did he care to please so much as to profit. To come with the 'enticing words of man's wisdom,' and to preach only themselves, is the note of false teachers. The charge of Christ's minister is, 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,' to 'divide the word of truth aright' unto his people; and this was our author's aim. God's oracles are to be faithfully expounded, not curiously minced, not loosely dallied with. And surely the plain song of Scripture is the best music, without these quavering descants of man's wit. How licentiously and profanely popish friars have abused God's holy word by their trifling postils, it is too manifest. Yea (be it spoken with due modesty and reverence to those worthies to whose industry and wit the Christian church is so much beholding), some of the ancient doctors were too far in love with quaint interpretations, especially Origen, whose excessive allegorising (by the confession of Eusebius,* who yet was his great favourite and partial in his praises, caused the apostate Porphyrius to blaspheme and to scoff at the Scriptures: which consideration, no doubt, moved Calvin, Melanthon, Martyr, and the rest of our late and learned expositors, to stick so close to the letter of the text, and in all simplicity to deliver the meaning of the Holy Ghost. Their judgment our author approved, and followed their example, opening, in these lectures, the simple and most naturally-intended sense of the holy apostle, and thence urging and applying the observations so effectually, that many, not only of his ordinary hearers, but even of the university, by whom he was much frequented, blessed God for the direction and comfort

* Lib. vi. c. xviii.

they received from his mouth. The life of delivery in him was very powerful, and made great impression on his hearers. This book wants that advantage, which yet is here supplied, because those things which then were only delivered in the ears of few, are here submitted to the eyes of all.

Touching the author himself, I need not say much. Although, after a sort, he condemned himself to obscurity, and affected a private and retired life, yet he could not hide himself from the eyes of the world, being generally noted and esteemed for his holiness, his integrity, his learning and gravity, his indefatigable pains in the discharge of his ministerial function, his singular wisdom and dexterity in the government of our college, which, by God's blessing upon his care, hath sent forth many learned ministers into the church, many worthy gentlemen into the commonwealth. Briefly, in his whole conversation he was so sincere and unrebutable, that by some, partly by occasion of these lectures, he was defamed for preciseness. Indeed, as the times are now, the only means almost to avoid that reproach is to be notoriously wicked. But, in few words to wipe off that imputation, how much he condemned the injurious zeal of the separatists, how far he disliked all busy disturbers of the church's peace and quiet, still gravely exhorting to calmness and moderation, how heartily he revered his holy mother the church of England, and how willingly he conformed himself to her seemly ceremonies and injunctions, besides his practice, he hath so many reverend and grave witnesses, as he had familiar acquaintance. To say truth, he was not of the Laodicean temper, nor yet 'pure in his own eyes'; zealous and fervent, not turbulent and contentious; a faithful servant of God, an humble and obedient son of the church, an enemy to faction no less than to superstition. Lastly, when the few and evil days of his pilgrimage were ended, as a comfortable death ever follows a conscientious life, he patiently and meekly endured God's gentle visitation, earnestly longed after his dissolution and to be with Christ, which he knew was best of all; and at length, when the time of his changing was come, devoutly commanding his soul to the mercy of his Redeemer, he closed up his eyes in peace, and was carried to his grave with honour. He now rests from his labours, and his works follow him; he hath left behind him a blessed memory, and a name sweeter than any ointment. This holy monument of his industry I command to thy use and serious meditation, good Christian reader, which, favourably accepted, may encourage me to publish other of his labours. The Lord Jesus bless all our endeavours to the building up of his church, and our own everlasting salvation. Amen.

Thine in the Lord Jesus.

CHRISTOPHER POTTER.

Queen's College, Nov. 28. 1617.

LECTURES

ON THE WHOLE

EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

LECTURE I.

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: grace be with you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
—PHILIP. I. 1, 2.

WHEN first it pleased the Lord to call me to this set work in this place, by reason of my short time to deliberate, I chose for the time that text of Scripture which was appointed to be read for the epistle the next Sabbath, beginning at the 5th verse of the 2d chapter of this epistle, purposing afterward to make choice of some other scripture which happily might better fit this place. But so it pleased the Lord to dispose that I should go forward even throughout the epistle unto the end, and the last day conclude my observations thereupon in your hearing. Now I have thought good again to begin with that whereof I have made an end, that so, if the Lord will, the meaning of this whole epistle, and the doctrines thereof, may in good time be delivered in your hearing.

Paul and Timotheus. I shall not need to speak much touching the occasion whereupon the apostle wrote this epistle, because I have already spoken almost of all the things that occasioned it. The Philippians having heard of the apostle's imprisonment at Rome, sent their minister Epaphroditus unto him, with relief from them to supply his necessities. Whereupon Epaphroditus, coming to Rome, told the apostle the state of the church at Philippi, how that there were false apostles crept in amongst them, which urged circumcision and the works of the law, and that the Philippians constantly withheld them. The apostle therefore, to commend their constancy, for their further encouragement thereunto, to arm them against the false teachers, for their clear satisfaction

in the points which they urged, and to give them thanks for their great liberality towards him, wherein they shewed their care for him, wrote this epistle unto them.

Wherein, as in all other his epistles, is set down, 1, the inscription; 2, the salutation; 3, the body of the epistle itself. In the inscription we have, 1, the persons saluting; 2, the persons saluted. The persons saluting are described, 1, by their proper names, and then by a title of dignity common to them both. The names of the persons saluting are Paul and Timotheus: Paul, called also sometimes Saul, the writer of this epistle, and Timotheus, the approver of it; or Paul, the inditer of it, and Timotheus, the writer of it. The title of dignity common to them both, whereby they are described, is this, ‘the servants of Jesus Christ;’ servants both, and therefore to attend upon their ministry and service; and both servants of Jesus Christ, and therefore to attend upon the ministration of the gospel which he had committed unto them; but yet the servants of Jesus, the Saviour of the world, even of Jesus Christ, anointed a king to defend us, a prophet to teach us, and a priest to offer up a sacrifice for our sins. The persons saluted are generally the whole church of Philippi, and more particularly the bishops and deacons there. The whole church at Philippi generally is saluted under the name of ‘all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,’ for by *all the saints in Christ Jesus* he meaneth all them which in baptism had given their names unto Christ

Jesus, thenceforth to die unto sin, and to live unto God in righteousness and true holiness, which was all the church at Philippi. Now this Philippi was a chief city in the parts of Macedonia, Acts vi. 12, whose inhabitants came from Rome to dwell there, the first city in the passage out of Thracia, beyond the river Strymon. At the first it is generally thought to have been called Crenida, because of many fountains about the hill whercon it was built, Κρήνη being as much as *fons*; and afterward to have been called Philippi, because of the fortification and enlargement thereof by Philip king of Macedon; and now to be called Griconpolis, as if ye would call it Chrysopolis, a city of gold, because of the great abundance of gold that is there,—so great that Philip is said to have received thence yearly about one thousand talents of gold, which is as much as six hundred thousand French crowns. This city is notably known, as for the great overthrow of Brutus and Cassius there by Octavius and Antony, so especially for the preaching of the gospel there by Paul and Silas and Timotheus, for the embracing of the truth there by their ministry, and for many other accidents there during the apostle his abode there; for Paul being warned by the Spirit to go into Macedonia, he went thither, and first came to Philippi, and there preached, and by his preaching converted Lydia, so that she and her household were baptized. Afterwards he cast out of a maid a spirit of divination. Whereupon he was brought before the magistrates, sore beaten with rods, cast into the inner prison, and his feet thrust into the stocks. Being there in prison, the foundation of the prison was shaken by an earthquake, the doors were opened, the prisoner's bands were loosed, the jailor was converted, he and his house baptized, and the apostle delivered. For these things this city is well known, and it was the church generally in this city that the apostle saluted.

The persons more particularly saluted are the bishops and deacons there; where by bishops he meanth the pastors and teachers which laboured in the word and doctrine. For both the word so signifieth throughout the whole New Testament, and here it must needs so signify, because he speaketh of many in one church. By deacons also he meanth those that by their office were to receive and distribute the common liberality of the church, according to the necessities of all the poor members thereof, such as we read to have been ordained in the church, Acts vi. 5, and such as are described by our apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 8, &c. Unto whom, together with the bishops, the apostle is thought here to write, as to magnify their office, so because theirs had been the care chiefly, in respect of their office, to send the church's liberality to him by their minister Epaphroditus.

The salutation followeth, wherein he wisheth them all good, from him which is the author of all goodness. Where is set down—1. The thing which he wisheth unto them, which is 'grace and peace,' understanding

by grace the free favour of God, wherewith he loveth his children, and whence, as from the fountain, all other goodness doth flow; and by peace every blessing, corporal and spiritual, for this life and that that is to come, flowing from that fountain of grace; 2. is set down unto whom he wisheth this grace and peace, namely, unto 'all the saints at Philippi, together with the bishops,' &c.; 3. is set down the author from whom and by whom he wisheth this grace and peace unto them, which is from 'God our Father,' as the fountain and first original from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, and 'from the Lord Jesus Christ,' as the means by whom every grace of the Spirit is conveyed and derived unto us. Thus much for the purpose of the apostle in these words, and the meaning of them. Now let us see what notes we may gather hence for our farther use and instruction.

Paul and Timotheus. First, then, for the very name of Paul, it should not pass us reading or hearing of it, but therein we should observe the great mercy of our gracious God towards sinful creatures. For what was Paul, that now wrote unto the churches here and there to stablish them in the faith? Surely he was sometimes a bloody Saul, a cruel persecutor of God's church, Acts xxvi. 10, 11, one that, having received authority of the high priests, shut up many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death gave his sentence and punished them throughout all the synagogues, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being more mad upon them, persecuted them even unto strange cities; one that was a blasphemer, 1 Tim i. 13, an oppressor, that spared neither men nor women, Acts xxii. 4, but beat them, and bound them, and delivered them unto death; one that persecuted the church of God extremely, and wasted it, Gal. i. 13. All which things himself testifieth of himself. Could there well have been a more forlorn man, a more desperate and godless creature? Yet this man was received unto mercy, yea, unto such mercy that the Lord called him to be an apostle, and chose him to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. And that this was a work of the Lord his own mercy, our apostle himself witnesseth, where he thus saith, 'I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and an oppressor, but I was received to mercy,' 1 Tim. i. 13. And why was he received to mercy? Himself tells us, saying, 'For this cause was I received to mercy, that Jesus Christ should first shew on me all long-suffering, to the ensample of them that shall in time to come believe in him unto eternal life.' ver. 16. It was then the Lord his great mercy towards him, that of a cruel persecutor he became an holy apostle of Christ Jesus, and this mercy was shewed on him, that in him might be an example of God's mercy towards miserable sinners. I might instance in the like mercy of the Lord towards Matthew, first a publican, afterwards an evangelist; towards Zaccheus, first a sinful man, afterwards a notable convert; towards the

thief on the cross, erewhile on the cross, after a while in paradise, &c. But I will not trouble you with multitudes of examples, wherein might appear the riches of God's great mercies towards great and grievous sinners.

Neither let this be any encouragement unto any man, to let loose the reins unto sin, because 'where sin aboundeth, there mercy aboundeth much more ;' for if any man, upon such examples of his mercies, shall presume and make bold to sin, let him also know that, as the Lord is merciful, so is he also just, and that towards him, and such as he is, justice shall triumph over mercy. Rather let this so loving mercy of the Lord teach us neither to despair in ourselves nor of others, though great sinners ; for what though we have omitted such things as we ought to have done, not only so, but committed such things as we ought not to have done ! What if we have committed incest with Lot, or murder and adultery with David ! Nay, what if we have been blasphemers or persecutors with Paul, unjust with Zacheus, or thieves with him on the cross ! The Lord hath mercy enough for us in store, and others as great sinners as we, and overtaken with the like sins, have been received unto mercy. Only let us acknowledge our sins with David, weep for our sins with the woman in the Gospel, Luke vii. 38, obey when the Lord calleth upon us with Paul, receive him joyfully when he cometh unto us with Zacheus, and pray fervently unto him with the thief upon the cross, and then assure we ourselves we shall be received unto mercy. And who knoweth of any but the Lord may give grace unto repentance, and then surely followeth mercy ? The Lord his mercies are in his own dispensing ; he may when he will, and he doth when he seeth it good, renew the heart, and grant mercy. Though therefore the prodigal child run a lewd course for a long time, yet let us hope that the Lord will at length give grace unto repentance, and receive him unto mercy.

Paul and Timotheus. The second thing which I note is, that the apostle joineth unto himself Timothy ; aged Paul, young Timothy ; an excellent apostle, an inferior minister ; the author of the epistle, him that only approved it, or at the most wrote it from his mouth ; and all this to grace and credit Timothy with the Philippians, unto whom he meant shortly to send him, as it appeareth by the next chapter, verse 19. Whence (1.) I observe a notable example of rare humility, for a rare and seldom thing it is to be seen, superiors to receive their inferiors into the honour of their labours, and to be willing that what honour or favour may accrue unto them by their labours, may be communicated likewise to their inferiors, who had little or no hand in them. Nay, commonly, superiors in authority, or learning, or otherwise, count it a great debasing unto themselves to be thought to have had their inferiors to have joined with them in their labours, to have used their help, or to equal them with

themselves. Yet such was Paul's humility, that he gladly received Timothy, a faithful minister of the gospel, but far inferior unto him, into the honour of his labours, and equalled him unto himself, as if his hand had been as far in the writing of this epistle as was his own, that as they should accept of him for it, so they might accept of Timothy also. He had learned that lesson well which our blessed Saviour gave both him and us to learn from himself, saying, 'Learn of me that I am meek and lowly in heart,' Mat. xi. 29. And himself herein gave the Philippians a good pattern of that whereunto afterwards he exhorted them, Philip. ii. 3, that 'in meekness of mind every man should esteem others better than himself.' His estimation of Timothy, and his lowliness of heart, are sufficiently witnessed by this his associating of him unto himself. But such a self-loving hath now possessed men, that such humility is hardly to be found. Every man likes his own labours so well, and stands so much upon his reputation, that he cannot endure the disgrace that any man should say or think that he hath had this or that help, this or that advice, that he never did this or that of himself. To have the credit or commendation of any thing well done of ourselves, we like it well ; but if any be joined in with us, especially our inferiors, we make little reckoning, and oftentimes had as lief want it as have it so ; so far are we from the apostle's humility. Whereunto if we will attain, we must not 'think of ourselves above that is meet,' we must think of others according to their worth ; we must not think much to receive others into the honours of our labours, and we must make ourselves equal to them of lower sort than ourselves. And this if we do, we shall be good followers of the apostle's humility.

(2). In this joining of Timothy unto himself, I observe a good pattern of that care which ought to be had of the ministers' credit with his people. For wherefore did the apostle join Timothy unto himself ? He meant to send Timothy shortly unto the Philippians, to instruct them in the ways of God more perfectly, as appeareth by the next chapter ; and therefore, for the better credit of him in his ministry with them when he should come unto them, in writing unto them he receiveth him into the honour of his labours, and joineth him unto himself. So should they do that are called unto greater place in the church than others of their calling. They should by all means seek the grace, and credit, and countenance of the minister with his people ; yea, whatsoever might be for the furtherance of him in his ministry, they should with all holy care regard it ; for the grace, we see, of the minister is the grace of his ministry, and the more he is countenanced by his superiors, the more he prevaleth in his ministry with his people. As, therefore, they would give testimony of their care of the church, and of the building up thereof by the ministry of the gospel, so they should have care of the

minister's credit with his people. And I wish they would do so. But I pass over to that which followeth.

The third thing which here I note is the title of dignity, common to them both, whereby both Paul and Timothy are described. In the latter to the Corinthians, and in the epistle to the Colossians, the apostle, in the inscription of his epistles, joins Timothy to himself, as here he doth; but there in title he severeth himself from Timothy, saying, 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and our brother Timotheus;' and likewise in the epistle to Philemon, saying, 'Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and our brother Timotheus.' But here he makes no difference betwixt himself and Timothy, assuming only that title which was common to them both, 'the servants of Christ Jesus;' which title, in itself, albeit it be common to them with all that have given their names unto Christ Jesus, forasmuch as this is the title of all that are baptized into Christ Jesus, yet both in other places doth our apostle entitle himself, and in this place entitle both himself and Timothy, and consequently all the ministers of the gospel, hereunto in a special respect of their service in the ministry of the gospel of Christ Jesus, and of the great dignity and honour vouchsafed them thereby. Hence, then, (1.) I observe a duty for the ministers of the gospel, whereof their very names is to put them in mind. They are called the servants of Christ Jesus; they must therefore remember that they are so, and carry themselves as servants of Christ Jesus, and not lords over God's heritage. A servant is to do that, and that only, which his master commands him; he is to be faithful in his service; he is not to seek his own, but the things of his master; his life is not to be dear unto him in the service of his master. The ministers, then, of the gospel, being the servants of Christ Jesus, as he doth bid them to pluck up, or to root out, or to destroy, or to build, or to plant, so they are to do. If he give them a roll to eat, they must eat it up; if he give them a commission, they must look into it, and not go without the bounds of it; if he send them to kings and princes, or whomsoever, they must keep nothing back, but deliver unto them 'all the counsel of God'; if he require them to lay down their lives for his sake, they must not 'love their lives unto the death.' 'Go,' saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, 'and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' These be the words of our commission: 'Teach.' But what? 'What I have commanded you.' For other we must say as Balaam unto Balak, Num. xxiv. 13, 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot pass the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; what the Lord shall command that will I speak.' We are servants of Christ Jesus, and therefore we must do as he hath commanded us, and not otherwise.

What shall we say, then, unto them that coin us out new articles of the faith; that add, and detract, and change at their pleasure the rites and ceremonies in the sacraments; that thrust upon us traditions, and unwritten verities; that press us with a number of things, as observation of days, and months, and times, and years, vows of poverty, chastity, and blind obedience, pilgrimages, invocation of saints, adoration of images, and the like, things never commanded by God, nor having any warrant in the word? Are these the servants of Christ Jesus? They will needs be the vicars and vicegerents of Christ Jesus upon earth. But is not this to carry themselves as lords over God's heritage, thus to rule over them in things not commanded by the Lord? If they be the servants of Jesus Christ, they may not rule over the consciences of men in things not commanded by the Lord; or if they so rule over them, they are not the servants of Christ.

Again, what shall we say unto them that hide their talent in the earth; that suffer the graces of God's Spirit to wax idle and to decay in them; that do not use the gifts bestowed upon them, to the gaining of men unto the faith, and to the increase of Christ's kingdom; that 'sow pillows under all arm-holes'; that heal the hurt of the daughter of the Lord's people with sweet words, saying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace'; that give not the people warning when they are commanded; that keep back part of their message, and do not deliver the whole counsel of God as they are appointed? Are these the servants of Jesus Christ? Of every servant, and of every disposer, it is required that he be faithful, 1 Cor. iv. 2. Now, is this to be faithful in the Lord his service, either to leave it undone, or to do it otherwise than it should be done, or to do it but in part, and by halves. If so, then let these be servants of Jesus Christ; if not, then either they are no servants, or unfaithful servants of Christ Jesus. And to be none, or to be but bad ones, is no great difference.

Again, what shall we say unto them that, with Demas, forsake Paul, and 'embrace this present world'; that, with Diotrephes, love to have the pre-eminence amongst men than to labour in the works of their calling; that follow their ease, or their pleasure, or their profit, and look not to the charges committed unto them; that 'seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's', Phil. ii. 21, like unto those of whom our apostle complaineth. Are these the servants of Christ Jesus? A good servant's care is about his master's matter, not his own. So that if they be servants, yet surely no good servants, because they care for their own and not their master's, or more than their master's.

Lastly, what shall we say unto them that, when persecutions and troubles arise, start aside like a broken bow; that love their lives better than that for their ministry they will hazard them unto the death;

that either will not speak unto Herod, or else will handle the matter better than that, for aught they will speak, they will lose their head with John Baptist, or be cast into prison, and there have their feet clapped fast in the stocks with Jeremiah the prophet? Are these the servants of Christ Jesus? Our apostle, when he was going into certain bands, Acts xx. 24, 'I pass not at all,' saith he, 'neither is my life dear unto myself, so that I may fulfil my course with joy, and the ministration which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' Here was a good servant of Jesus Christ, and such should all his servants be; and they that are not such are either none, or no good servants of Jesus Christ. If, then, we will be rightly entitled with Paul and Timothy unto the servants of Jesus Christ, let his word be our warrant for whatsoever we teach men to observe and do, and let us not dare to pass the limits of our commission, to do otherwise than we have received commandment of our Lord and master Christ Jesus; let us faithfully use the gifts and graces of God's Spirit bestowed upon us, for the gaining of men unto the faith and knowledge of Christ Jesus, and let us not dare either to smother them, or otherwise to lay them out than to our master's advantage; let us always in all things seek the honour and glory of Christ Jesus, and let us not dare to seek our own ease, or pleasure, or profit, or honour more than the things of Christ Jesus; let our ministration which we have received of our master Christ Jesus be most precious in our eyes, and let not our lives be dear unto us to spend them in his service. Thus, indeed, shall we be rightly entitled unto the servants of Christ Jesus in respect of our ministry; and thus shall we well discharge that duty, whereof this title may sufficiently remember us.

The second thing which I observe from this title whereunto Paul and Timothy are entitled, is the great honour and dignity vouchsafed unto the ministers of the gospel of Christ Jesus. For what greater honour and dignity than this, to be the servants of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the world, the mighty God, the king of glory, the prince of peace, the great bishop of our souls, the everlasting high priest of our profession! And that in that service, to bear his name before the kings, and princes, and great men of the earth; to be his ambassadors, to declare his will unto his people; to be his stewards, to give every man their portion of meat in due season! 'Let a man,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'so think of us as of the ministers of Christ, and disposers of the secrets of God.' And how can a man be better esteemed than if he be so thought of? Again: 'We,' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 20, 'are ambassadors for Christ.' What, for Christ? What honour is this! To be ambassadors for a mortal prince, is such an honour as not many great men are vouchsafed unto. What honour then is it to be ambassadors for Christ, the King of kings and Lord

of lords, which all the ministers of the gospel are! And when the Lord told Ananias, Acts ix. 15, that Paul was 'a chosen vessel unto him, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel,' in effect he told him that he had called him unto the greatest honour among the sons of men. And yet this is the honour of all them that serve him in the ministry of the gospel.

Which honour, if he knew, that will needs be the vicar of Christ on earth, then why doth he not rest satisfied with this honour, to be the servant of Jesus Christ in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but he must be the supreme head over all persons upon earth, so that kings and princes must lay down their crowns at his feet, and be deposed and disposed of at his pleasure? Howsoever he know it or know it not, if it be known amongst us, why is it that we are made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things? The calling of a minister, what more base and contemptible among men, and yet what calling indeed more high and honourable! Whoso person more maligned and disgraced, than the person of the minister, and yet whose more to be reverenced and countenanced? Well, howsoever commonly we be thought of, we are the servants of Jesus Christ in the ministry of the gospel for your sakes; and 'as though God did beseech you through us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, that ye be reconciled unto God.' And howsoever ye think of us, yet think as ye ought of the word of your salvation which we bring unto you, and receive it from us, 'not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God, which is able to make you wise unto salvation.'

The fourth thing which I note, is in the persons of them whom he saluteth, and unto whom he writeth. The persons generally are 'all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,' even the whole church of Philippi, so many as were baptized into Christ Jesus. Whence I observe what ought to be the study even of the whole church militant, which is, to be saints in Christ Jesus, that such as they are in outward profession, such they may be in truth and in deed, through the power of the Spirit of sanctification in the inner man. Now we are, so many as are haptized into the name of Christ Jesus, by an outward profession, saints and holy, our baptism so witnessing our holy profession, as circumcision did the Jews'. It is then another holiness whereunto we are to give all diligence, than this sacramental holiness, even an inherent holiness, that being 'sanctified throughout, both in our souls and in our bodies, we may be blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' We must study to be 'holy in all manner of conversation, even as he which hath called us is holy, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.' And hereunto we do bind ourselves, as it were, by solemn vow and obligation in the presence of the church, when we are sacra-

mentally sanctified by baptism, promising there to ' forsake the devil and all his works, constantly to believe God's holy word, and obediently to keep his commandments.' So that henceforth, as the apostle often exhorteth, we should ' walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit ; ' we should ' crucify the flesh with the affections and the lusts,' and ' walk in the spirit, in newness of life ; ' we should ' cast off the old man, which is corrupt through the deceivable lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ; ' in a word, we should ' die unto sin, and live unto God.' Otherwise how is our baptism the washing of the new birth unto us, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost ? Sacramentally it is, but effectually it is not, unless by the power of the Spirit of sanctification the body of sin be destroyed in us, that it may not reign in us, and the life of God be renewed in us, that we may live unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Neither doth it indeed at all profit us to be sealed outwardly with the seal of an holy profession, unless by the power of the Spirit we be sanctified in the inner man, to lead our lives in all godliness and holiness ; for unto these only ' Christ Jesus is made of God wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption,' and these only are made partakers of that imputed holiness which properly is in Christ Jesus, and is imputed unto them which are in Christ Jesus. And this is it which indeed makes us holy, and saints in Christ Jesus. Our inherent holiness is utterly unperfect, full of unholiness, and all shall be perfect in the heavens ; yet is it so accepted with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that having it, his is imputed unto us, whereby we are made saints in Christ Jesus ; so that if, as we are called, and as by outward profession, through baptism, we are saints in Christ Jesus, so we will truly be saints in Christ Jesus. We must follow after holiness, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto

the glory and praise of God ; this inherent holiness only being the pledge and seal of that imputed holiness, whereby we are most truly saints in Christ Jesus.

A good lesson for all them to meditate upon that are baptized into the name of Christ Jesus, but whereon it may well seem that a great many of us never think. For if we did, could it be that we should so wallow in sin, and drink iniquity like water, as we do ? that we should so defile ourselves with adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, hatred, debate, emulations, wrath, contentions, envy, theft, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, pride, lying, swearing, and the like, as we do ? that we should so profane the Lord's Sabbaths, so decline from the works of the spirit, and so delight ourselves in the works of the flesh, as we do ? ' Know ye not,' saith the apostle, Rom. vi. 3, 4, ' that all we which have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.' Surely either we know it not, or remember it not ; and whether soever it be, it argueth that we are not the men that we should be. Beloved, sin and saints sort not together. If ye suffer sin to reign in your mortal bodies, well may the filth of the flesh be put away through the outward washing ; but ye are not indeed of the communion of saints, because not washed by the Spirit in the spirit of your minds. Let no man therefore deceive himself. Either ye must be saints in Christ Jesus, or else ye belong not to his kingdom. And if ye be saints, then may ye not suffer ' sin to reign in your mortal bodies.' Flee, therefore, from sin as from a serpent, and ' follow after peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' So shall ye not only be of the number of them that are called saints through the body of their outward profession, but ye shall be indeed saints in Christ Jesus.

LECTURE II.

With the bishops and deacons ; grace be with you, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.—PHILIP. I. 1, 2.

IT remaineth now that we come unto the persons saluted more particularly, which are the bishops and deacons at Philippi ; where by bishops he meaneth the ministers and teachers there which laboured in the word and doctrine. For that the word must needs so signify in this place appeareth, because he speaketh of many bishops in one church and city. And so frequently it signifieth in the New Testament, as easily may be seen by looking into those places where this word is used. Afterward the name of bishop came to be a distinct title, of men more eminent in the ministry, as now it is. By deacons, also, the apostle, I take it, meaneth those that by

their office were to receive and to distribute the common liberality of the church, according to the necessities of all the poor members thereof, such as we read to have been ordained in the church, Acts vi. 5, and such as are described by our apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 8, &c. ; for albeit the word here used have likewise other significations in the New Testament, yet here the distinction of bishops and deacons sheweth, that by deacons are meant such as attend on distribution, not on teaching or exhortation. Now, unto these, together with the bishops, the apostle is thought here to write, as to magnify their office, so because theirs had been the care chiefly, in respect of their office, to send the

church's liberality unto him by their minister Epaphroditus.

Here, then, 1, in that the apostle writeth, as to the whole church of Philippi, so particularly unto the bishops and deacons there, I observe that, as admonitions, exhortations, instructions, consolations, and the like, are continually needful for the church, for the further building thereof in perfect beauty, so are they likewise needful for the ministers of the church, and all others any way interested therein, for their farther confirmation in the things that belong unto their peace. Whereupon it was that our apostle, going bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, called the elders of the church of Ephesus together, and exhorted them, saying, 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock whereof the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,' Acts xx. 28. And hereupon it was that, in his epistles unto Timothy and Titus, he gave them so many instructions, admonitions, and exhortations, as he that readeth may there easily see. They were ministers of the gospel, set over their flocks, and well instructed in the Scriptures, yet still the apostle thought it needful to warn them, and to arm them, and to 'instruct them in the way of God more perfectly.' For he knew that Judas the apostle had 'fallen from the fellowship which he had obtained in the ministration of the gospel, and had purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, Acts i. 17, 18; as also that many that laboured with him in the gospel 'sought their own, and not that which was Jesus Christ's;' and that many fainted and shrunk through the opposition of false teachers.

Here, then, 1, is a good lesson for them that are greatest and most eminent in the church, I mean for the reverend fathers and bishops of our church, that be it by writing or speaking, instruction or exhortation, or else howsoever, they seek the good, as of all the saints in Christ Jesus that depend upon them, so withal of the bishops and deacons, I mean of them that are appointed for the work of the ministry, or for any function about the church. A better precedent than the apostle's they cannot have to follow, and as needful too it is now to write and speak unto and labour with the pastors and teachers of the people as then it was. For many now we have that with Demas 'embrace this present world,' but very few that with Demas return again unto their former love. Nay, which is worse, many now we have that never had former love that was good whereunto they should return, men that first and last sought their ease, or their pleasure, or their profit, or their honour, but never reckoned to feed the flock of God, whom as it were needful to reform, so is it also needful to confirm others, to admonish others, to encourage others. And who so fit for this as they that, as Paul, are of greatest place in the church?

2. Hence learn you patiently to suffer yourselves to

be instructed, admonished, and exhorted. For if these things be needful for your pastors and teachers, how much more needful are they for you! Even so much more as ye are less taught in the word than they are. Whether, then, we write or speak unto you, 'suffer ye the words of exhortation' and instruction from us gladly.

My second observation hence is from this, that there were now bishops and deacons there unto whom he might write. For hence I observe the great blessing of the Lord upon the preaching of the word. A little while before, at the first preaching thereof unto the Philippians, it was so unsavoury unto them, that they could not brook Paul and Silas, but cast them into prison; but now such a blessing the Lord hath given unto the word preached by them, that the number of converts and believers was very great, insomuch that now they had ministers to attend on teaching, and deacons to attend on distribution, and an absolute ecclesiastical government, as it may seem, amongst them. This was the Lord his doing; for 'Paul plants, and Apollos waters, but God gives the increase,' 1 Cor. iii. 6. And this increase he giveth as it pleaseth him, sometimes sooner, sometimes later. Upon one sermon of Peter 'there were added unto the church about three thousand souls,' Acts ii. 41. But at other times and in other places the seed of the word, which both he and other of the apostles did sow, lay oftentimes a good while in the ground before it brought forth fruit unto the Lord. So in this city of Philippi, Lydia at the first received the word gladly, Acts xvi. 14, but in others it took root downward, and sprung up afterward, howsoever sooner or later, as in the primitive church, through the apostle's doctrine, 'the Lord added to the church from day to day such as should be saved;' so doth he always make a blessing to follow upon the word, though unto us it seem oftentimes to perish. So he promised long since that he would, saying, Isa. iv. 10, 11, 'Surely as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to him that eateth; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I will, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.'

Here, then, is a great comfort over our labours in our ministry with you that hear us. Though the word which we bring unto you be rejected and despised, and we reviled and persecuted, yet we faint not, but are full of comfort, because we know that the Lord will give a blessing unto his word. Which, howsoever it do not always appear unto us, yet shall it, and doth at one time or other, break forth into the fruits of holiness and a saving knowledge in as many as are ordained unto life. And still we know this, that his word always doth his will, and prospereth in

that whereunto it is sent ; so that this blessing always follows upon it, that God's name is thereby glorified, whether it be in them that be saved or in them that perish. For as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16, ' We are unto God the sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other we are the savour of life unto life.'

And let this suffice for the inscription.

Now followeth the salutation, wherein the apostle wisheth the Philippians all good, from him which is the author of all goodness. And (1.) is set down the thing which he wisheth unto them, ' grace and peace ;' understanding by *grace*, the free favour of God whereby he loveth his children, and by *peace* every blessing, corporal and spiritual, flowing from that fountain of grace. (2.) Is set down unto whom he wisheth this grace and peace—viz.: ' To all the saints at Philippi, with the bishops,' &c. (3.) Is set down the author from whom and by whom he wisheth this grace and peace unto them, which is ' from God our Father,' as the fountain and first original, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; and ' from the Lord Jesus Christ,' as the means whereby every grace of the Spirit is conveyed and derived unto us.

1. The first thing which here I note is, that the apostle wisheth grace and peace unto the Philippians. The received manner of salutation among the Jews was this, ' Peace be unto you.' So Amasai unto David, 1 Chron. xii. 18, ' Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto thine helpers.' So the Lord unto Gideon, Judges vi. 23, ' Peace be unto thee.' So Christ unto his disciples, Luke xxiv. 36, ' Peace be unto you ;' so he taught his disciples to say, Luke x. 5, ' Peace be to this house,' wherein they wished all prosperity and good to them whom they so saluted. But, after the full and clear manifestation of grace in the whole mystery of our redemption, still we see the apostles' salutations to be, ' grace and peace be with you ;' wherein they do not only comprehend all blessings absolutely that are to be prayed for, whether for this life or that is to come, but plainly demonstrate the fountain whence all other blessings flow, and which principally is to be prayed for, be it in prayer for ourselves or for others.

Hence, then, I observe, what the things are which we must wish and pray for to our brethren, if we will wish them all good ; and they are grace and peace, only two blessings of goodness in show of words, but indeed all the blessings of the God of Isaac unto Jacob and his seed for ever. For what is grace ? It is the love of the ever living God, wherewith he freely loveth and accepteth us in Christ Jesus. And what is peace ? It is principally a tranquillity and quietness in conscience, through the forgiveness of our sins by the grace and love of God toward us ; but generally, whatsoever goodness floweth from grace. Now we see the rich treasures of blessings stored up

in these blessings of grace and peace. In the blessing of grace, there is given that which is the cause both of peace and all good blessings whatsoever. For whence are our election unto salvation, our vocation unto the knowledge of the truth, our adoption into the sons of God, our justification unto righteousness, our sanctification unto holiness, our reconciliation with God, our hope of glorification in the heavens ? Whence is it that we believe in the holy Trinity, that we are strong in hope, that we love God and our brethren, that we have peace with God and our own consciences, that we rejoice in the Holy Ghost, that in our thoughts we think, in our desires we will, in our actions we do anything that is good ? Are not all these things from the blessing of grace ? Is not the free favour and love of God in Christ Jesus the cause of all these things ? Yes, surely ; because God loveth us in his well beloved, therefore doth he thus enrich us with spiritual graces in heavenly things ; and further, giveth us the true possession of all temporal blessings, of health, wealth, strength, liberty, and the like, so far as he seeth it to be good and needful for us. So that in the blessing of grace all these things are given us in the cause. Now, in the blessing of peace are given all the good things themselves which proceed from that cause, whether they be spiritual graces or temporal blessings. For so I understand and conceive hereof, that in the blessing of peace are given all things whatsoever are either certain tokens or probable signs of peace with God ; so that the spiritual graces of God, being certain tokens of our peace with God, and the temporal blessings of God being probable signs thereof, as adversity and trouble are probable signs unto man of God's displeasure, even all these are given in the blessing of peace. What blessing, then, of God can we wish or pray for to our brethren which is not treasured up in the blessings of grace and peace, the one being the fountain of all good things, and the other being the good things themselves ; the one releasing us from sin, the other freeing us from all evil conscience, the only two fiends that trouble and torment us ?

Will ye, then, learn, in a brief and short sum, to comprehend whatsoever blessing is needful to be prayed for for your brethren ? I think ye will be willing, for long prayers either for them or for yourselves is very wearisome unto you ; pray, then, for grace and peace unto them : first for grace, then for peace, for unto whom grace is given peace shall be granted ; but if grace be not first, peace shall not follow, no more than the stream runs where the fountain is dried up.

2. In this apostolical salutation I observe a most evident testimony of the apostle's love towards the Philippians, and consequently of their love toward their brethren that use it. For, beloved, how can I give a better testimony of my love towards you than if with the apostle I say unto you, ' Grace be with

you, and peace from God our Father'? &c. Can I pray better for you than when I pray that the grace of God may abound towards you, that the love of God in Christ Jesus may be manifest in you? Can I wish you better than when I wish that you may have peace with God, peace within yourselves, and peace one with another? Can I desire better things at the hands of God for you than that the grace of God may continually prevent and follow you, and that thence all spiritual graces and temporal blessings may be ministered unto you, both for this life and that that is to come? Or can mine affection of love be more inflamed towards you than when thus I pour out my soul for you, that so by grace ye may be released from sin, and the punishment thereof, and by peace from the pitiful throbs of a tormenting conscience? Did not Moses, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, and Daniel, and the rest of the prophets, thus manifest their love unto the people of God, by praying for them, and wishing all good things unto them? Did not our blessed Saviour thus shew his love towards his apostles, and all them that should believe through their preaching, when he made that long prayer for them? John xvii. And thus should we testify our love unto our brethren, even by Christian salutations, holy prayers, and hearty wishes for grace and peace unto them from God, &c.

But such testimonies are not now common. Nay, he that shall now give such a testimony of his love unto any of his brethren by such a form of salutation, he shall be sure to be noted for his pains, and odiously to be traduced. Whereof as I see no reason, so neither do I think it meet that this be the form of salutation, whatsoever be the subject and matter of our writing. But, to let that pass, is it not so, that there are strifes, debates, envyings, hatreds, contentions, and divisions amongst us? Is it not so that we wound and kill one another, if not with swords, yet with tongues whet like swords, fastening lies and slanders, and suspicions one upon another? Is it not so that we rather eat and devour one another than wish one another's good? Yes, surely; the godly man may now sorrow with David, and say, 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have mine habitation among the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt among them that be enemies unto peace. I labour for peace; but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle,' Ps. cxx. 5-7. And is it so with us, and can we say that we are so affectioned one to another as that we wish grace and peace from God one unto another? Nay, well may we flatter ourselves, but in truth we cannot say so. For as they only love God that love their brethren, so they only wish peace from God unto their brethren that love to live in peace with their brethren. Beloved, we are brethren; why should we then strive one with another? Why, then, should there be heart-burnings in one against another? Rather we should be at

peace one with another, and wish grace and peace from God one unto another. Thus did the apostle, and herein left an example for us to follow, that as he walked in love towards all the saints in Christ Jesus, so we also should walk in love one towards another. Let therefore the same mind be in us that was in our apostle, and let us from our very souls wish grace and peace from God one unto another. Let our greetings be with holy prayers, for abundance of all the Lord's mercies unto our brethren, and so let us testify our loving affection towards them.

3. In this apostolical salutation I observe a brief sum of Christian religion, in the using whereof we shew forth a most notable testimony of our faith. I can only note the points of Christianity briefly which it containeth, and must leave the serious consideration and meditation of them unto yourselves. The first point is, that all blessings, whether spiritual graces or temporal blessings bestowed upon us, are from God the Father, by Jesus Christ his Son. So also saith the apostle James, saying, i. 17, 'Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadowing by turning.' And so we confess when we pray for 'grace and peace,' whereby all blessings are signified unto our brethren, 'from God our Father,' &c. His name therefore, for every blessing we have, is to be blessed and praised for ever, and that song of David, Ps. ciii., is of all God's children to be taken up, 'Praise thou the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,' &c.

The second point is, that only God is to be prayed unto for all blessings by Jesus Christ. So our blessed Saviour hath taught us, where he teacheth us thus to pray, Mat. vi. 9, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' &c. And so we confess when we pray for grace and peace unto our brethren, 'from God our Father,' &c. And as Peter said unto Christ, John vi. 68, 'To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life;' so I say, to whom should we pray for any blessing? 'Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above,' &c., as even now we heard out of James. Frivolous, therefore, and impious is the invocation of saints, whereby that honour is taken from God which is chiefly due and properly belongeth unto him, I mean prayer. For 'how shall any man call on him in whom he doth not believe?' Rom. x. 14. Or in whom shall any man believe but in God only? So then, if only we be to believe in God, then are we only to pray unto God, and therefore not unto saints.

The third point is, that the grace and free favour of God in Christ Jesus is the very fountain of all God's blessings bestowed upon us. So the Holy Ghost witnesseth throughout the whole Scripture, saying, Rom. iii. 24, that 'we are justified freely by grace,' that we are 'saved by grace,' Eph. ii. 8, and that 'by the

grace of God we are that we are,' 1 Cor. xv. 10, whatsoever we be, and whatsoever blessing we have. And so we confess in effect, when we pray first for grace and then for peace; that from grace, as the fountain, may flow peace and all the rivers of God's blessings. Man's merits therefore must stand aside, we may not hold any blessing of them, but only of grace. For as the apostle disputeth of election, Rom. xi. 6, so may it be said of any blessing of God, 'If it be of grace, it is not of works, else were grace no more grace; and if it be of works, then not of grace, or else were works no more works.' One of these excludeth the other, so that whatsoever is by the one is not by the other.

The fourth point is, that we are to believe in God the Father, and in Christ Jesus his Son. So our blessed Saviour teacheth us where he saith, John xiv. 1, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me;' as if he should have said, Ye believe in God, and so ye are to do; believe also in me, for so ye are to do. And so in effect we confess, when we pray unto God the Father, and Christ Jesus his Son, for grace and peace unto our brethren. For as even now we heard, unto whom we pray, in him we are to believe; as also again, in whom we believe, unto him we are to pray. Accursed, therefore, be their infidelity, that either deny there is, or doubt whether there be a God or no, and make a mock at the Son of God. In whom now they believe not, at his presence they shall tremble, and 'cry unto the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,' Rev. vi. 16.

The fifth point is, that we are sure that God hath reconciled [us] unto himself by Jesus Christ, and adopted us through him into his sons. So the apostle telleth us, 2 Cor. v. 18, where he saith that 'all things are of God, which hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ;' and, Ephes. i. 5, that 'he hath predestinated us to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.' And so we confess when we wish 'grace and peace from God our Father;' for if he [is] our Father, then we [are] his sons, and a reconciliation made between him and us. And therefore, having finished all things, our blessed Saviour saith, John xx. 17, 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;' where give me leave by the way to put you in mind of one point, wherein of late it may be I somewhat erred. When last I spake of this point, in handling of those words, 'unto God, even our Father,' &c., I told you that it was observed that not any saith with Christ, *my Father*, as many say with Thomas, *my Lord, my God*. And so, indeed, it is observed by Zanchius on those words. But since I perceive by as faithful and diligent an observer of the Scriptures,* that

* Dr Rain.

Elihu, speaking unto God, saith, Job xxxiv. 36, 'My Father, let Job be tried,' &c., not, indeed, in our English translations, following the judgment of some of the rabbins, but yet in the best approved translations. So that it may not be a rule that none may say with Christ, *my Father*, but as we say, *my God, and our God*, so may we say, *my Father, and our Father*. And herein is the sweet comfort of all God's children, that we may cry unto God *Abba*, which is 'Father,' that we may pray and say, 'Our Father,' that we may wish 'grace and peace from God our Father'; for if he be our Father, and we his sons, then are we also 'heirs of God, and heirs annexed with Christ.' And let all the comforts in the world stoop unto this one comfort, the very soul's joy of all them that have received the Spirit of adoption.

The sixth point is, that Christ Jesus our Lord is our only Mediator, by whom only we have access in our prayers unto God, and by whom we receive whatsoever we have of God. So the apostle witnesseth, 1 Tim. ii. 5, saying, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, which is the man Christ Jesus;' by whom, Heb. iv. 16, 'we go boldly unto God, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' And so we confess in effect, when we 'pray for 'grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,' as the means by whom we are partakers of grace and peace; for so they are from the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is the means by whom they are conveyed and derived unto us from God, even our Father. The saints, therefore, are no mediators of intercession for us, either to bring us unto God, or to bring his blessings unto us. Our high priest is 'able perfectly to save them that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,' Heb. vii. 25; and as to save them, so to give them all graces good and needful for them.

The most of the rest of the points I will conclude in one, which is this, that Jesus Christ is God, which we confess when we pray for grace and peace from him; that he is the Saviour of the world, which we confess when we call him *Jesus*: that he is that counsellor and great prophet, that King and Prince of Peace, that Lamb of God, slain from the beginning of the world to take away the sin of the world, which we confess when we call him *Christ*; and that unto him is given all power in heaven and in earth, which we confess when we call him *Lord*. If he, therefore, be with us, we need not to fear who be against us. For he is our God, our Saviour, our Lord, our Master, our King, our everlasting High Priest. I cannot prosecute either these or the rest of the points. By these you will conjecture the rest, and easily see the epitome of Christianity concluded in this short salutation.

LECTURE III.

I thank my God, having you in perfect memory, &c.—PHILIP. I. 3-5.

NOW give me leave, before I come to that which followeth, to note one thing farther from the words already handled, and that is, the apostle's often using of the name of *Jesus Christ* in so few words. Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake, and still his mouth was filled with *Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ*, insomuch that three several times still he ingeminates *Jesus Christ*: ‘Paul and Timothy, the servants of *Jesus Christ*, to all the saints in *Jesus Christ*: grace be with you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord *Jesus Christ*.’ Which argueth that his comfort was in him, that his love was set on him, and that he was unto him, as the spouse speaketh in the Canticles, chap. v. 10, ‘the chiefest of ten thousand.’ Hence then I observe a rule whereby commonly to discern what a man is: his speech commonly bewrayeth what he is. The worldling his tongue is still talking of the world, the covetous man of his mouey, the voluptuous man of his pleasure, the proud man of his rich attire, the delicate man of his dainty fare, the pot-companion of his cups, and the like, commonly talk most of the things they like best, and by their talk commonly they may be discerned what they are. And in this respect, as it is with them that set their affections on things which are on earth, so is it with them that set their affections on the things which are above. They are still talking of the word of their salvation, of the commandments of the Lord, of the mercies of the Lord, and of the things that belong unto their peace; as David professeth of himself, saying, Ps. ci. 1, ‘My song shall be of mercy and judgment;’ exix. 13, 15, ‘With my lips do I speak of all the judgments of thy mouth:’ ‘I talk of thy commandments, and have respect unto thy ways;’ exlv. 5, ‘I will talk of thy worship, O Lord, thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works;’ xxxv. 28, ‘My tongue shall be talking of thy righteousness all the day long, and I will tell of thy salvation from day to day.’ But of all other things their delight is, in their hearts to muse, and with their tongues to talk, of *Jesus Christ*. Here their hearts dance for joy, and the talking hereof is more sweet than honey and the honey-comb unto their mouths. Hereon they love, as it were, to dwell, and their tongues can never be satisfied with talking on him. And why? Here is their comfort, here is their hope, here is their love, here is their ‘crown of rejoicing.’ Here is their protector in all dangers, their reconciler unto God, their mediator between God and them, their Saviour from their sins, and he that is ‘made of God unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.’ Here is he ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,’ of mercy and love, in whom alone the Father

is well pleased. And therefore here, as men ravished with joy, they cry and cry again, ‘Holy Jesus, sweet Jesus, blessed Jesus,’ even as we see the spouse in the Canticles, not to leave her bridegroom, Christ Jesus, after once she catch hold of him, but still cries, Cant. iv. 15, ‘O fountain of the gardens, O well of living waters, and of the springs of Lebanon!’ v. 10, 11, ‘My well-beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand: his head is as fine gold, his locks curled, and black as a raven,’ &c. Thus the children of God love to talk of him whom their soul loveth, and thus commonly a man may discern who are saints in Christ Jesus. Commonly, I say, not evermore certainly; for if good speech, and holy talk, and crying, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and often using of the name of *Jesus Christ*, were a perpetual and certain rule of a good Christian, the dissembling hypocrite would be as good a Christian as the best. And a hard matter it is not to be deceived sometimes by the hypocrite. But commonly, I say, a man’s speech bewrayeth what he is, holy or profane, the ground of which note is that saying of our Saviour, Mat. xii. 34, that ‘of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;’ and otherwise we cannot judge whereon the heart thinketh, but by that whereon the tongue runneth.

Hence then learn you, beloved, to make trial unto yourselves, and to give trial unto others, what ye are. Your tongue and talk may tell yourselves, and do tell others, what ye are. What is it whereon your tongues love most to talk, and wherein ye take most pleasure when ye talk? Is it on the things which are on earth? It may be a token unto yourselves and others that ye are earthly-minded. Is it on the things which are above? It may be a token unto yourselves and others that your conversation is in heaven. If ye love Christ Jesus, if ye take comfort in Christ Jesus, your tongues will be talking of *Jesus Christ*, and your hearts will rejoice when your tongues are talking of him. As, therefore, the apostle exhorteth the Colossians, iv. 6, so do I you: ‘Let your speech be gracious always, and powdered with salt.’ Let the mercies which ye have in Christ Jesus be so sweet and comfortable unto you, that your hearts may delight always to muse, and your tongues always to talk, of Christ Jesus. Let him be hid in your heart, let him break out in your tongue, and let him rejoice both the heart and the tongue, that so ye may have testimony within yourselves, and give testimony unto others, that ye are saints in Christ Jesus. Now proceed we to that which followeth.

I thank my God. After the inscription and salutation, now followeth the body of the epistle itself, wherein the principal scope and drift of the apostle is, to confirm the Philippians in the truth wherein they

stood, that they might not only not decrease, but increase in all knowledge and in all judgment. In this exordium, or beginning of his epistle, which is from ver. 3 to 12, to testify his love toward the Philippians, that so they might the rather hearken unto him, 1, he signifieth his rejoicing, on their behalf, for the grace of God already bestowed on them ; 2, he signifieth his assured hope of God's farther mercy towards them, in performing the good work which he had begun in them ; 3, he prayeth for their perseverance, and increase in all knowledge and in all godliness. His rejoicing on their behalf he signifieth, 1, in his giving of thanks unto God on their behalf ; 2, in remembering them in his prayers unto God ; 3, in praying for them with gladness. The grace of God already bestowed on them, for which he rejoiced in their behalf, is said to be, 1, their fellowship with other churches in the gospel ; 2, their perseverance therein from the first day they had received the gospel, till now that he wrote unto them. This is the general resolution of these words.

Now for the more particular opening of the meaning of them. In that, in the beginning of his epistle, he thanketh God on the Philippians' behalf, he observeth his usual manner, for so he beginneth almost all his epistles, as anon we shall hear. In that he saith that he thanketh his God, he signifieth his bold and near approach unto God in giving thanks, and in praying unto him. Again, in that he saith, that 'he hath them in perfect memory always in all his prayers for them all,' he meaneth that, as always he thanketh God for them all, so always, in all his prayers unto God, he remembereth them. And he addeth that his prayers are always poured out unto God for them 'with great joy and gladness of heart.' Why ? 'Because,' as he addeth the reason, 'of the fellowship which they had received in the gospel.' 1. Because they, as other churches, had received the gospel, and thereby had fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ, and because they had continued in the truth from the first day of their conversion unto Christ by his ministry, until now that he wrote unto them. This was the cause of his thanksgiving ; and his continual prayers, wherein he always remembered them, were that they might continue in that grace, even in that fellowship which they had received in the gospel. It is then briefly as if the apostle had thus said : 'I thank my God always on your behalf, for that fellowship which you have with the Father and the Son, with us, and with other churches, by embracing the gospel, and for your perseverance therein, from the first day that I, and Silas, and Timothens preached it unto you, unto now ; and always, in all my prayers unto God, I remember you, praying for you with gladness for the grace already granted you, that ye may continue and increase in that grace. This I take to be the meaning of these words.'

The first thing, then, which here I note is, the

apostle's beginning of his epistle with thanksgiving unto God on the Philippians' behalf. And so be beginneth all his epistles with thanksgiving unto God on their behalf to whom he wrote, only his epistles to the Galatians, and to Titus, and the former to Timothy excepted. And so Peter beginneth his former epistle. Whence I observe, that thanksgiving unto God is a service principally requisite in a Christian. 'I exhort,' saith the apostle, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 'that first of all,' or above all things, 'supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men.' And in the former to Thessalonians, v. 18, he willeth 'in all things to give thanks ; for that this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.' And not any sacrifice is more exactly commanded or described in Leviticus than the sacrifice of thanksgiving, Lev. vii. 12. Whereupon, if we look into the practice of the saints of God, we shall find that they were never slack in this service. Melchisedec, after Abraham's victory, slacked not this service, but gave thanks unto the most high God, which had delivered his enemies into his hand. Moses also, and the Israelites after their deliverance from the Egyptians, and out of the Red Sea, Exod. xv. 1, slacked not this service, but sung praises unto the Lord. So did Deborah, and Barak, and Jehoshaphat, and many others, after their victories over their enemies. And how often do we read that, as others of his servants, so our blessed Saviour himself, gave thanks unto his Father ? All which shew clearly how requisite this service of thanksgiving unto God is, if either we will hearken to the precepts and exhortations of the Holy Ghost, or do as we have the saints of God, and our blessed Saviour, for example.

What then ? Doth the Lord need the praises of man, or is he delighted with his giving of thanks ? No ; the Lord needeth them not, neither is he delighted therewith so much for his own sake. Yet doth he require them of us, and is delighted therewith for our sakes ; for (1.) in giving of thanks unto God, we acknowledge that to be from him for which we give him thanks ; (2.) in giving him thanks we shew ourselves well pleased and content with that spiritual grace or temporal blessing wherefore we give him thanks ; (3.) in giving him thanks, we return what we can unto the Lord, with humble confession that we can no more, nor that but by grace ; lastly, in giving of thanks unto God, we provoke him to bestow farther mercies upon us : all which things he requireth of us, and liketh well in us. And for these very reasons, besides the former, is thanksgiving unto God so requisite a service in a Christian.

Yet as requisite a service as it is, we fail as much in it as in any service. It may be, that being in peril, or persecution, or sorrow, or need, or sickness, or other like adversity, we will make our requests known unto God in prayer and supplication, as the occasions are, publicly or privately. But when the

Lord hath heard our prayers, and granted our requests, when he hath done more for us than we could desire or think, what giving of thanks is there unto God, either publicly or privately? For instance, now of late when the Lord opened the clouds of heaven, and threatened by rain to deprive us of that blessing of the fruits of the earth which he had shewed unto us in great plenty and abundance, then we poured out both public and private prayers, in our churches and in our houses, that it would please the Lord to send us such weather whereby we might receive the fruits of the earth in due season. But now that the Lord hath sent us seasonable weather, and given us good hope of reaping the fruits of the earth in due season, in what congregations publicly, in what houses privately, is the voice of praise and thanksgiving heard? I instance only in this, but as it is in this, so is it in other things. Not one of ten that sings the song of praise and thanksgiving after benefits received; it is too harsh a note, we cannot tune it; all, or the most part of us, being liker unto those nine lepers that never returned back to give God praise, than unto the stranger that returned, Luke xvii. 18. Beloved, by unthankfulness we provoke God's wrath against us as much as by any sin, and therefore Paul reckons it up amongst the most heinous sins, 2 Tim. iii. 2; but the sacrifice of thanksgiving is as pleasant and acceptable unto God as is any sacrifice; and therefore by David the Lord saith, Ps. l. 23, 'Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me,' even with most excellent honour. Let us therefore cleanse ourselves from this sin of unthankfulness, and 'let,' as the apostle exhorteth, Philip. iv. 6, 'our requests be shewed unto God in prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks.' The fouler that the sin of unthankfulness is, let us the more detest it, and the more requisite that thanksgiving to God is, let us the more abound therein. Let us follow the counsel of the apostle, Col. ii. 6, 7, and 'walk in Christ Jesus, rooted and built in him, and stablished in the faith, as we have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.'

The second thing which here I note is, the cause of the apostle's thanksgiving unto God, which is, because of the fellowship which they had in the gospel from the first day until then; (1.) because they, as other churches, had received the gospel, whereby they had fellowship with the Father and the Son, and because they had continued in the truth from the first day of their conversion unto Christ by the work of his ministry, unto now that he wrote unto them. Whence I observe a principal matter of our thanksgiving unto God, a principal cause why we should, upon the blessing bestowed upon us, give thanks unto God for it. In all things, indeed, is matter of our thanksgiving unto God, for 'every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' &c., Jas. i. 17. He created us, formed us, and made us, and that in his own image: 'In him we

live, move, and have our being;' he giveth health, wealth, peace, liberty, food, raiment; he 'sendeth rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons,' delivereth in all dangers, comforteth in all troubles, helpeth in all needs, blesseth the work of our hands, and filleth us with plenteousness of all good things. And for all these we should, and have great cause, from day to day, to tell out his praise with gladness, and to offer unto him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. But yet is a more principal matter behind, which is the fellowship which we have with other reformed churches in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the continuance thereof so long time amongst us, the preaching of the word of our salvation amongst us, and the blessed increase thereof under a most gracious government. Here is, indeed, principal cause of rejoicing and thanksgiving, for by our fellowship which we have with other churches in the gospel, we have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, as John witnesseth, saying, 1 John i. 3, 'That which we have seen and heard,' to wit, the gospel, 'declare we unto you, that ye may also have fellowship with us, and that our fellowship also may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' By our fellowship in the gospel we are 'called out of darkness into his marvellous light,' and we 'which in time past were not a people, are now the people of God, and we which in time past were not under mercy, have now obtained mercy,' as Peter witnesseth, 1 Peter ii. 9, 10. By our fellowship in the gospel, we are 'born again, not of mortal seed, but of immortal,' and are 'begotten unto a lively hope in Christ Jesns,' as the same Peter witnesseth, 1 Peter i. 3, 23. And by our fellowship in the gospel we are 'made wise unto salvation, through the faith which we have in Christ Jesus,' as witnesseth our apostle, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Oh blessed fellowship in the gospel, whereby we are made wise unto salvation, whereby we are regenerate, and begotten unto a lively hope in Christ Jesus, whereby we are called out of darkness into light, and of no people made the people of God, and whereby we have fellowship with Christ Jesus, which is the great end of the ministry of the gospel, that we may have fellowship with him, and walk in the light as he is in the light. Again, the continuance of our fellowship in the gospel from the first day of her majesty's most gracious government over us unto now, our perseverance in the truth, without being removed away unto another gospel, which is not another gospel, save that there be some which trouble you, and intrude, to pervert the gospel of Christ, what a principal blessing is this of our good God unto us! Surely these are such blessings as may well make us break out into exclamation with David, Ps. cxvi. 12, 13, 17, and say, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for these his great mercies towards me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.' This was

David's resolution upon deliverance from dangers by Saul, and much more upon such blessings as these have we just cause of such resolution, God being principally in this soft and still voice of the gospel.

Have we, then, such principal cause of thanksgiving unto our God for the fellowship which we have with other churches in the gospel, and for the continuance of this fellowship from the first day unto now, even these forty years? This, then, 1, should teach us, willingly and gladly to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ when it is brought unto us; for, if there be such cause of thanksgiving unto God for it being had, then surely is there great cause of gladly embracing it when it may be had. And yet what dulness, and slackness, and coldness herein! In this congregation how is it embraced? I bear you record, some of you, that ye do embrace it willingly and gladly, and I assure myself that from your hearts you thank your God for it. But others there are that seldom or never come unto the hearing of it; others that, when they should hear it, turn their backs, and depart away from the hearing of it; others that hear it sleepily, or coldly, so that either it enters not in, or quickly after is choked by the cares of this world. Do these thank God for the fellowship which they have with others in the gospel? Nay, they have none, and some of them will have no fellowship with others therein; and therefore, unless at length they take hold of the grace that is offered them, they shall have no fellowship with the Father, or with Jesus Christ his Son. As for you, beloved, that gladly embrace the gospel of your salvation, hold on your good course, thirst after it as the hart doth after the water brooks, frequent the places where ye may hear it, lay it up in your hearts, that ye may not sin against the Lord, and let your mouths be ever filled with praises and thanksgiving to God for it.

Secondly, This should teach us to labour by all holy means to continue in the grace and in the truth wherein we stand unto the end. For if it should so principally cause in us thanksgiving unto God, then should it also work in us all holy desire and labour to be daily more and more established and strengthened in the truth of Christ Jesus, and in our fellowship with other churches in the gospel. And yet how wavering are we, many of us, and how quickly 'carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the deceit of men, and with craftiness whereby they lay in wait to deceive!' If a runagate seminary, that compasseth sea and land to make one of his profession, and, when he is made, makes him twofold more the child of hell than he himself is, a sworn vassal to that man of sin, a disloyal traitor to his prince, an unnatural enemy to his country,—if such a one, I say, shall, with feigned words, creep into secret corners amongst us, and glozingly slander the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and set abroad his own damnable heresies, how quickly do we listen unto them, and are led captive by them! Howsoever it be with us, it is thus in too many places. But,

beloved, let us know that 'whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not to house, neither bid him God speed,' 2 John 9, 10. I know they will tell you they bring the doctrine of Christ unto you; but do ye as the men of Berea did, Acts xvii. 11, which are much commended for so doing, examine it by the Scriptures, and 'search whether it be so,' and ye shall find it to be the doctrine of devils, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Tim. iv. 1, and as even by that place it will appear to be. Wherefore, beloved brethren, as now ye have fellowship with other churches in the gospel of Jesus Christ, so continue therein; let nothing be able to remove you from the truth wherein you stand, but 'hold fast your good profession unto the end.'

The third thing which here I note is, the apostle's bold, and near, and joyful approach unto God in his thanksgiving unto God, in that he saith, 'I thank my God.' Whence I observe the manner of our thanksgiving unto God, how we should offer our sacrifice of thanksgiving unto him; and that is, (1.) with such assurance of God's love in his mercies towards us, as that in our thanksgiving for them we dare boldly, as sons, say, I thank my God, for so shall our sacrifice of thanksgiving be acceptable unto God, if upon assurance of his love we boldly pour out our souls in praise unto him. And therefore the apostle to the Hebrews exhorteth, saying, chap. iv. 16, 'Let us go boldly unto the throne of grace; be it in prayer or in thanksgiving; 'Let us go boldly unto the throne of grace, praying and giving thanks unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' (2.) Our thanksgiving should be offered with such willingness and cheerfulness from our hearts unto God, that we might say, I thank my God. So our apostle, in another place, 1 Cor. xiv. 18, 'I thank my God, I spake languages more than ye all.' How cheerfully he openeth his mouth in praise of his God. And so shall our thanksgiving be pleasing unto God, if we offer it from the heart cheerfully; for he 'loveth a cheerful giver,' as of alms unto the poor saints, so of thanks unto his name. And how can I go unto him with greater cheerfulness and thank him, than when I go unto him as to my God, and say, I thank my God! (3.) Our thanksgiving unto God should be offered up with such soul-melting passion and affection, that, as if we had greater feeling experience in our souls of his goodness than others, and would be nearer him than others, we should say, I thank my God; for such the Lord loveth best as press nearest unto him, and then the sacrifice of praise pleaseth most where the soul is tied the closest unto his God. These are the things in which the manner how we should offer up our sacrifice of thanksgiving consisteth, namely, in faith and full assurance of God's love towards us, with all willingness and.

cheerfulness from our hearts, and with a soul-ravished affection, as of a more than ordinary feeling experience of God's goodness towards us. And this manner, I take it, may be observed from this, that the apostle saith, I thank my God.

Here, then, that cold and cursory form of thanksgiving which commonly is used is utterly condemned; for, what do we when the Lord hath remembered us in mercy, and done great things for us? I doubt not but there are who in their hearts cheerfully, and with their mouths joyfully, say with the prophet, Ps. cxviii. 28, 'Thou art my God, and I will thank thee: thou art my God, and I will praise thee.' But a great many of us, 'like unto horses and mules, which have no understanding,' either remember not, or regard not to give God thanks. A man may see it daily in many of us, that we come from our beds, and from our

meals, as dogs from their kennels, and oxen from their stalls. Others of us have certain words of course, as to say, 'God be blessed,' 'God be thanked,' 'I praise God,' 'I thank God,' which, being good words in themselves, yet are so coldly and cursorily uttered by us, as that a man may well see they have their beginning in the lips, and their ending in the air, but never pierce the heavens. But, beloved, if we will have our voice of thanksgiving to break through the clouds, and to come unto the highest, we must use Mary's *magnificat*, Luke i. 46, and say, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.' As, therefore, it becometh us to be thankful, so let us remember, in faith and full assurance of God's love towards us, to pour out our souls in thanksgiving unto him, that so our sacrifice may be acceptable unto him.

LECTURE IV.

Having you in perfect memory, always, in all my prayers for all you, praying with gladness, because of the fellowship which ye have in the gospel, from the first day unto now.—PHILIP. I. 3-5.

NOW, farther, the apostle signifieth his rejoicing on the Philippians' behalf, and his love towards them, by remembering them in all his prayers unto God, and by praying for them with gladness, when he saith, that he 'hath them in perfect memory, always in all his prayers,' &c. It is usual with the apostle in his epistles, as to signify his thanksgiving unto God on their behalf unto whom he writeth, so to signify his remembrance of them always in his prayers. But yet here the apostle signifieth this his remembrance of them in his prayers, in more than an usual manner. In the epistle to the Romans, to the Colossians, the former to the Thessalonians, and to Philemon, he telleth them to whom he writeth, that he 'maketh mention of them always in his prayers.' But here he tells the Philippians that 'always in his prayers he hath them all in memory,' that always in his prayers he hath them all in 'perfect memory,' that always he hath them all 'in perfect memory in all his prayers,' that in all his prayers he 'remembereth them with gladness,' each circumstance, more than other, importing his most careful remembrance of them in his prayers unto God, that they might continue in that grace wherein they stood, in that fellowship which they had with other churches in the gospel. For therefore thanked he God, and was glad on the Philippians' behalf, because of the fellowship which they had in the gospel from the first day until then; and therefore he prayed for them, that they might continue in that grace, and in that fellowship with other churches in the gospel.

The first thing then which here I note is, that on whose behalf the apostle gives such thanks unto God and is so glad, for them also he prayeth. Whence I observe, that whatsoever graces be bestowed on us,

still prayer is needful for us, both that we pray for ourselves, and that others pray for us; for neither is any grace so perfect in any, neither are all graces so complete and full in any, but that both he hath need of perseverance and increase in that grace wherein he standeth, and to have other graces supplied which he wanteth. Abraham, full of blessings, yet wanteth a child, and he must pray that he may not go childless, Gen. xv. 2; Isaac full of blessings, yet his wife is barren, and he must pray unto the Lord for his wife, to make her womb fruitful, xxv. 21; Jacob full of blessings, yet he is in danger of Esau his brother, and he must pray unto the Lord, 'I pray thee deliver me out of the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau,' xxxii. 11. Neither is any so enriched with all graces, but that his requests are to be shewed unto God, in prayer and supplication for the supply of some; and as not any are enriched with all graces, so not in any is any grace so perfect, but that he hath need to bend the knees of his soul unto God in humble prayer, for perseverance and increase in that grace wherein he standeth. David's delight in the law of the Lord, in his statutes, and in his testimonies, was as great as a man's could be, as himself sheweth, Ps. cxix. 97, saying, 'Lord, what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study in it;' ver. 54, 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage;' ver. 111, 'Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever;' and why? 'They are the very joy of my heart;' and yet his prayer is, 'Oh teach me thy statutes, oh cause thou me to make much of thy law, incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness;' and as he hath done, he hath left us an example so to do, be we never so zealous of the law

of God. The apostles likewise, it is like, were as strong in the faith as any man is, and yet they prayed unto the Lord, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5, and therein left an example for all the children of God to follow until the day of Jesus Christ, be they never so stablished in the faith. Never any so zealous of God's glory and holy worship, but he had need, even in respect of himself, to pray, 'Hallowed be thy name.' Never any had his conversation so much in heaven, but that he had still need to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' Never any man's will so conformed unto God's will, but that he had still need to pray, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' Never any man so filled with plenteousness, but that he had still need to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Never any man's sins so wholly pardoned, but that in regard of his continual slidings he had still need to pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' Never any man so freed from temptation and from the devil, but that he had still need to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' And therefore our blessed Saviour hath appointed this form to be used by all the faithful, unto what degree of perfection soever they be come, even to the end; so that whatsoever graces be bestowed on us, yet still is prayer needful for us. Neither only that we pray for ourselves, but that others also pray for us. We are not many of us better than was Timothy, that faithful servant of Jesus Christ; yet for him Paul poured out prayers night and day, and no doubt it was needful for him, 2 Tim. i. 3. We are not the best of us like unto Paul, that elect vessel of Jesus Christ, yet he requested the prayers of the faithful for him, Eph. vi. 19, 20, 'that utterance might be given unto him, that he might open his mouth boldly to publish the secret of the gospel, and that therein he might speak boldly as he ought to speak.' He was one that feared not the face of man, that kept nothing back, but delivered his message always faithfully and boldly; yet for this grace he thought the prayers of the faithful needful for him, and therefore craveth them not only of the Ephesians, but likewise of the Colossians in his epistle to them, chap. iv. 3.

Far, therefore, be it from us, beloved, to say, as the manner of some is, unto any of God's children, Bestow your prayers where you list, I need not your prayers, I care not for your prayers; pray for yourself: all your prayers will be little enough for yourself; I will pray for myself. These be the words, not of them that abound with grace, but of them that are not taught in the word, nor know how much the prayer of a righteous man availeth, if it be fervent. Far likewise be it from us, once to dream of any such perfection in ourselves, but that we have still need to pray, to abound more and more in all grace, and in all things daily more and more to grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ. For be it our predestination, our election, our adoption, our reconciliation, our justification, which

are as sure unto all the sons of God as that God is true, yet even in respect of these have we need always to pray, that the assurance of them may be daily more and more sealed unto our spirits by the pledge of God's Spirit. Again, be it our faith, our hope, our love, our knowledge, our judgment, or the like, which are the work of God's own finger in all his children, yet in respect of these have we need always to pray for continual increase, and all godly growth in them. Yea, be it whatsoever grace wherein we are so stablished that we are sure we cannot finally fall from it, yet are we still to pray for perseverance therein, because he will have all them so exercised whom he will confirm unto the end. Whatsoever graces, therefore, the Lord hath bestowed upon us, yet still let us pray unto him, either for our farther assurance and confirmation, or for perseverance and increase in them. Let us pray for ourselves unto the Lord for every grace needful for us, and let us request to be commended by the faithful in their prayers unto God. This is our wrestling with the God of Jacob, and thus wrestling, we shall surely prevail; for so he hath promised, Mat. vii. 7, and faithful is he that hath promised.

The second thing which I note is, that the apostle, in his prayers for the Philippians, prayed for them all, for so he saith, that he 'had them in perfect memory always in all his prayers,' &c. Whence I observe how, in our prayers for the church, we ought to be affected towards it, namely, that so in our prayers we commend the whole church unto God. For what though in the church all be not knit together in one mind and in one judgment? What though all be not alike forward in acknowledging and embracing the truth? What though many things be done in the church through contention or vain glory? The apostle knew well that it was thus in the church at Philippi, as may evidently appear by sundry places in this his epistle; yet in his prayers unto God for them, he took no such notice of these things, as that he did seclude any of them out of his prayers unto God, but jointly he commendeth them all in his prayers unto God. Right so we; in our prayers for the church, we should not easily take notice of every contention, of every defect, of everything that may offend in the church, so to seclude any out of our prayers unto God, but in a Christian affection towards all, and in an holy desire for all, we should commend the whole church in our prayers unto God. It was such an ordinary practice with our apostle, both to give thanks unto God for all them to whom he wrote, and likewise to pray for them all, notwithstanding that many things were amiss amongst them, that we are not to doubt but that we are so to do, as we have the apostle for an example. Look into his epistles, and by the beginning almost of all of them, ye shall see that this was his ordinary practice, leaving us therein an ensample that as he did, so we should do. And the reason is plain; for doth not the apostle, in writing his epistles unto the churches, still write as unto the

beloved of God, and unto saints in Christ Jesus, still entitling the whole church unto which he wrote unto these titles, without exception of any? Or doth the apostle so, and are not we to do so? Or are we to do so, and not to commend the whole church in our prayers unto God? The reason, I take it, inferreth the point, and commendeth unto us that general care of commanding the whole church in our prayers unto God.

A good lesson, and well worthy the learning of many in these our days, for as it fareth more privately and particularly amongst men, so doth it fare more publicly and generally in the church. Amongst men ordinarily, every trifling matter is enough to cut off all love and friendship amongst us, nay, to breed great hatreds and enmities amongst us, nay, to set us at such odds, that rather we will ban and curse one another, than pray one for another. And if we differ in judgment one from another about some matters of the church, then nothing on one part but carnal gospellers! and time-servers! nothing on another part but sacrilegious persons! schismatical persons! troublers of the state! and hypocritical dissemblers! nothing but slandering, and forging things never writ or spoke; nothing but such uncharitableness, as that it may be feared that, on some part, there is little praying for the other, unless it be to confound them. Neither is it otherwise more publicly and generally in the church, if we may judge by outward appearances. Some parts of the church, unto some, seem to have so many defects and blemishes, so many superstitious rites and ceremonies, that they cannot brook them, they cannot abide in them, they cannot pray with them: I know not whether they do pray for them; and of others, other parts of the church, because of their form of government, are so disliked, that they cannot with patience hear of them, and therefore, it is like do not in all their prayers remember them. But these and all such might hence be better lessoned, and such uncharitableness, if any such be in them, reformed. Let us, beloved, be otherwise-minded. Howsoever there be things amiss in the church, let us not seclude any out of our prayers unto God, but let us commend in our prayers the whole church unto God. In our prayers unto God, let us abandon all cogitation either of private quarrels one with another, or of public contentions in the church, and let us pray each for other, and all of us for the whole church, unto the Lord fervently. Let the same mind be in us that was in our apostle, and let us always, in all our prayers, have 'all the saints in Christ Jesus in perfect memory.'

The third thing which here I note is, the thing for which the apostle prayed in all his prayers for them, and that was the same in substance with that wherefore he gave thanks unto God; for as his thanksgiving unto God on their behalf was 'because of the fellowship which they had in the gospel from the first day until then,' so his prayers unto God for them were, 'that

they might continue in that fellowship which they had in the gospel unto the end.' Whence I observe a very material point to be remembered in our prayers unto God, both for the whole church and for ourselves, which is continuance in the fellowship of the gospel, that our church may continue in that fellowship which it hath with other reformed churches in the gospel, and that we may continue grounded and stablished in the truth wherin we stand. Here is indeed principal cause of prostrating ourselves before the throne of grace, and pouring out our souls in prayer unto our God, whether we look unto the curse in the wanting, or unto the blessing in the enjoying, of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. For what greater curse or plague of God could fall upon us, than that our candlestick should be removed from us, that a famine of the word should be sent amongst us, that the gospel of our salvation should be translated from us to another people? The Lord, threatening to bring a fearful judgment on the church of Ephesus, if they should not repent and return to their former love, saith, Rev. ii. 5, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come against thee shortly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.' What is that? That is, he will remove his church from thence, by taking his gospel from them. Even as our blessed Saviour also threatened the Jews, saying, Mat. xxi. 43, 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation which shall bring forth the fruits therof.' So the prophet, threatening a heavy judgment upon the rulers of Israel, Amos viii. 11, 'Behold,' saith he, 'the days come that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord;' which how grievous a famine and how heavy a judgment it is, appeareth by that of Solomon, where he saith, Prov. xxix. 18, that 'where there is no vision,' i.e. no sincere preaching of the word, no sound fellowship in the gospel, 'there the people perisheth,' even perisheth both in soul and body.

And as the curse and judgment is great and grievous of wanting, so is the blessing and benefit of having this fellowship in the gospel exceeding great and happy; for it is indeed our very life and soul, whereby we are begotten, born, and nourished into everlasting life, as Peter witnesseth, 1 Peter i. 3, 23; ii. 2. It is 'the lantern unto our feet, and the light unto our steps,' to bring us to 'the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem, and to the company of innumerable angels, and to the congregation of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just and perfect men, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel,' Heb. xii. 22-24. By it we are called out of darkness into light, instructed in the way of God perfectly, grounded and stablished in the faith, and made wise unto salvation; for it is 'the power of God

unto salvation unto every one that believeth,' Rom. i. 16. See, then, whether here it be not principal cause for us to pray for our church, that in it the gospel of our salvation may for ever be freely and sincerely preached; and for ourselves, that we may continue in that grace wherein we stand by the gospel of our salvation. Yes, surely if either fear of as great a plague of God's wrath as can fall upon us may force us to pray, or desire of as great a blessing of God as can befall us may persuade us to pray, we have great cause even to pour out our souls in prayer and supplication unto our God for the blessed continuance of that fellowship which we have with other churches in the gospel, that as now, so ever, this grace may be continued upon us. Yea, beloved, if ye shall but cast your eyes abroad into the land, ye shall find that there is great cause thus to pray; for how doth atheism and abominable irreligion spread itself, and overspread the whole face of the land! Hath it not nestled itself on high, and said within itself, Who shall bring me down to the ground? How doth papism and outworn Pelagianism now shoot out the head, and break out in many places, as if now the day approached wherein they may say, 'So, so, thus would we have it!' How hath cunning policy broken the neck of Christianity, and now so swayeth that it carrieth all almost with it! What neglect and contempt of the word is there in all places; and what else are these but forerunners of a fearful judgment to follow? What else do these threaten but the removing of the candlestick from us? Beloved, shall we see and know these things, and shall we not pray? Let us pray at evening, and at morning, and at midday; let us pray, and that instantly, that this judgment may never fall upon us; that this light of the gospel may never be put out, but that it may shine amongst us from generation to generation until the day of Christ Jesus. The more that the danger is, let us pray the more fervently, and let us not give ourselves any rest, but still pray unto the Lord for our continuance which we have with other reformed churches in the gospel.

The fourth thing which here I note is, that the apostle thus prayed for the Philippians 'always in all his prayers.' Whence I observe with what constant assiduity and carefulness we ought to pray for our church and for ourselves, that we may continue in the fellowship which we have in the gospel. We should never pray but always in our prayers, this prayer for our church and for ourselves should continually be remembered, that the fellowship which we now have with other churches in the gospel may for ever be continued unto us. To pray always, and not to faint or give over, is a thing much commended by the Holy Ghost. Rom. xii. 12, 'Continue in prayer,' saith our apostle, ; and again in another place, 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray continually;' and to the same purpose is that parable of the importunate widow in the gospel, Luke xviii. 1, all which places shew us the necessity of

prayer, that whensoever we stand in need we have recourse unto God by prayer; so the constant perseverance that is to be used in prayer, that howsoever for some time we seem to pray and be not heard, yet we faint not, nor give over, but still pray, and that instantly. Now, as we are to pray, and to pray always, so always in all our prayers this is to be remembered, that we pray that the Lord his way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations; that the preaching of the gospel may be fruitful unto us, and unto the whole church; that the word of the Lord may have free passage, and be glorified; that we may continue grounded and stablished in the faith, as we have been taught in Jesus Christ; that we and our whole church may continue in the fellowship which we have with other churches in the gospel. This the example of our apostle teacheth us to do, who, in that he did for others, left us an example what to do for ourselves and for others.

Yea, but is not the Lord always more ready to hear than we are to pray? And hath he not said, that 'whosoever asketh receiveth; that he that seeketh findeth; and that to him that knocketh, it shall be opened'? Or if it be so, what needeth it always in all our prayers thus to pray as hath been said? True it is, that whosoever asketh receiveth; and that the Lord is more ready to hear and to grant our requests than we are to pray and call upon his name, for commonly he preventeth us with his blessings; and whatsoever it is that we have by prayer, he it is that teacheth us to pray for it as we ought. But some things 'we ask often and receive not, because we ask amiss,' James iv. 3; and some things he hath appointed so to be granted, if they be continually asked; and of this sort is this thing whereof we now speak. He will, as it shall be for his glory, continue us in the fellowship which we have in the gospel, if we continue to ask it in faith, and faint not.

This, then, may teach us of what weight and moment our continuance in the fellowship of the gospel is. It is not a thing which happeneth by fortune, or which human policy effecteth, but only it is of God, and therefore always in all our prayers we are to pray unto him for it. Let us therefore pray unto the Lord without ceasing for his grace; let us never forget to commence this suit in our prayers unto God; let us always pray for it, and not faint.

The fifth thing which here I note is, that the apostle prayed for the Philippians 'with gladness,' because of their growth in godliness, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, by the work of his ministry. Whence I observe a necessary care which ought to be in the whole church,—I mean in all them that are taught in the word,—and that is, that they so profit and increase in all knowledge and judgment, in all godliness and holy conversation, that their pastors and teachers may pray for them with gladness. Such a care, it may seem, that the Romans had, unto whom the apostle

giveth this testimony, Rom. i. 8, that their 'faith which was published, and their obedience which was come abroad, much gladdened him.' Such a care it may seem that the Colossians had, unto whom the apostle giveth this testimony, that though he was 'absent in the flesh, yet was he present with them in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding their order, and their stedfast faith in Christ.' And such a care ought all the people of God to have, that they which watch for their souls, as they that must give account unto God for them, may now pray for them with gladness, and afterwards give their accounts for them with joy and not with grief.

But this care is not common among the people, for where the pastor in an holy care for his people prayeth for them, he prayeth for them in many places with great heaviness; with heaviness, I say, for their neglect and contempt of the word; with heaviness for their ignorance in the things that belong unto their peace, and unwillingness to be instructed therein; with heaviness for their ungodly conversation, and unchristian walking; with heaviness for spending his strength in vain, and for nothing amongst them. He prayeth, but his soul mourneth because he cannot gain them unto Christ Jesus; he prayeth, but his soul mourneth because they run, and needs will run, headlong to the devil; so little care commonly there is of profiting by the ministry of the word amongst them that are taught in the word.

Beloved, let it never be said so of you; but let your

care be that they which labour in the word amongst you may pray for you with gladness. James i. 21, 'Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of maliceousness, and receive with meekness the word that is grafted in you, which is able to save your souls.' Eph. iv. 15, 'Follow the truth in love, and in all things grow up unto him, which is the head, that is Christ.' 'Let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ,' and strive to increase in all good things with all godly increasing, for so, and so only, shall we have cause to pray for you with gladness.

Lastly, In that the apostle, having taught the Philippians the way of truth, giveth thanks for them, prayeth for them, and that with gladness, because of the fellowship, &c., hence I observe a duty of the pastors of the church, which, if time had given leave, and the place had been so convenient, should principally have been stood upon; and that is, that the pastors are not only to teach their people with the wholesome word which cannot be reproved, but they are also to pray for them that the word may have a blessing among them, that they may grow and increase thereby in all knowledge and holiness to the Lord. They are to be glad in their souls for their profiting in the word of grace, and they are to give thanks unto God on their behalf when they see their order, their stedfast faith in Christ, their growth in godliness, and righteousness, and holy conversation. This shold be, and might be, and I wish it were; and if it be not, it is their peril in whom it faileth to be.

LECTURE V.

And I am persuaded of this same thing, that he that hath begun this good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.—PHILIP. I. 6.

NOW give me leave briefly to note one thing further from those words, and that is, that both our thanksgiving and our praying are always to be unto God. Our thanksgiving, because all deliverance in dangers, all comfort in troubles, all help in time of need, all spiritual graces in heavenly things, and all corporal blessings whatsoever, are from him, the Father of all mercies and giver of all goodness, 'for every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' James i. 17. 'He upholdeth all such as fall, and lifteth up all those that be down: the eyes of all wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season; he openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness,' Ps. cxlv. 14-16. He killeth and maketh alive, bringeth down to the grave and raiseth up, maketh poor and maketh rich, bringeth low and exalteth, 1 Sam. ii. 6. 'He is our rock and fortress, our strength and shield, and he that delivereth us in all time of danger,' 2 Sam. xxii. 1. 'He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, which comfort-

eth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any affliction by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of him,' 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. 'He succoureth us when we are tempted, and suffereth us not to be tempted above that we be able, but giveth the issue with the temptation, that we may be able to bear it,' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'He created us, formed us, and made us for his own glory,' Isa. xlivi. 7. 'In him we live, move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. 'He blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ,' Eph. i., having chosen us in him, predestinate us to be adopted through him, redeemed us through his blood, justified us and sanctified us, washed and cleansed us from our sins in him, and begotten us by faith unto a lively hope in him. In one word, he is all in all things unto us, Col. iii. 11. Unto whom, then, should we sacrifice the calves of our lips, and offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, but unto him of whom, through whom, and for whom, are all things, and by whom we have all blessings in good things, and deliverance from all evil, even God blessed for ever! .

And as for these reasons we are always in all things to give thanks unto the Lord, so for the same reasons we are always to pour out prayers and supplications unto him, as we have need either of blessings in good things, or deliverance from evil. And therefore we read that ever the faithful, when they had need either of blessings in good things or deliverance from evil, they had their recourse unto God by prayer ; and as they were occasioned by blessings in good things and deliverance from evil, so they poured out their souls in thanksgiving unto the Lord. Moses and the children of Israel, when Pharaoh and the Egyptians pursued them, cried unto the Lord with strong cries, insomuch that the Lord said unto Moses, ‘ Wherefore criest thou unto me ? ’ Exod. xiv. 15. And when they had seen the mighty power which the Lord shewed upon the Egyptians, they sung unto him the songs of praise and thanksgiving, Exod. xv. So Jehoshaphat, and Judah, and Jerusalem, when the Moabites and Ammonites came against them^{to} battle, prayed in the courts of the Lord’s house, and said, ‘ O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven and reignest thou not on all the kingdoms of the heathen ? ’ &c., 2 Chron. xx. 6. And when the Lord had given them a marvellous victory over their enemies, they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah, or blessing, and there they blessed the Lord, ver. 26. So Hezekiah, when he was sick, turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and said, ‘ I beseech thee, Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart,’ &c., Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3. And when the Lord had restored him unto health, he sang the song of thanksgiving unto him, and said, ‘ The Lord was ready to save me, therefore will we sing my song all the days of our life in the house of the Lord ! ’ ver. 19, 20. So Hannah, being barren, prayed for a child unto the Lord, and wept sore, 1 Sam. i. 10 ; and when the Lord had granted her request, she thanked God and said, ‘ Mine heart rejoiceth in the Lord ; my horn is exalted in the Lord ; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies,’ &c., chap. ii. 1. And what should I more say ? The time would be too short for me to tell you of David, Daniel, Samuel, and the rest, which as they stood in need either of blessings in good things, or of deliverance from evil, made their prayers and supplications ever unto the Lord ; and again, as they were occasioned either by blessings or deliverances, offered their sacrifice of praise ever unto the Lord. Thus they were taught, and thus by the word and by their example we are taught, for all things to pray unto the Lord, and in all things to give thanks unto the Lord.

Beware, then, beloved, of them that with feigned words teach you to give thanks, or to pray unto saints severally or jointly, as to God and our lady, to God and St George, or the like ; for wherefore should we either pray or give thanks unto them ? Do they hear us, or know what we say or think ? Isaiah saith,

chap. lxiii. 16, that ‘ Abraham knoweth us not, and that Israel is ignorant of us ; ’ where the ordinary gloss citeth Augustine, saying, that the dead, even saints, know not what the living do. And Solomon saith, 2 Chron. vi. 30, that the Lord only knoweth the hearts of the children of men. Do they help us, or give anything unto us ? The psalmist saith, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, that ‘ the Lord giveth both grace and glory ; ’ neither dare it be avouched that the saints give grace or glory, or are the authors of any blessing. Or doth any commandment or example in the holy Scripture warrant us to pray, or to give thanks unto them ? Themselves grant that there is no warrant in the Scripture, from commandment or example, to pray or give thanks unto them, as unto the authors of any grace or glory, but only as unto intercessors before God for us. And yet in their practice it is most plain that they do not only pray unto them to pray for them, but to preserve them, to have mercy upon them, to bring them to the kingdom of heaven, &c., but admit that they pray unto them only as unto mediators and intercessors between God and them. Saith not the apostle that ‘ there is one mediator between God and man, which is the man Christ Jesus ? ’ 1 Tim. ii. 5. How, then, do they make more mediators ? Christ Jesus, say they, is our only immediate mediator before God, but the saints are mediators unto Christ, and therefore we conclude our prayers always saying, ‘ By Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Wherein, also, they deceive the world, for by their own portee * it appeareth that they have many prayers both unto Mary and to other saints, in the conclusion whereof they use not to say by Christ our Lord. But to let that go, are the saints our mediators unto Christ, to convey our prayers unto him ? and Christ our mediator unto God, to convey our prayers from the saints unto God ? By this shift, then, it cometh about that Christ is not the mediator between God and us, as the apostle affirmeth, but between God and the saints, and the saints mediators betwixt Christ and us. And this is the hand that they make by praying unto saints as unto mediators of intercession ; they thrust Christ Jesus out from being mediator betwixt God and us, and they do in truth pray unto the saints as unto the authors of grace.

But admitting that they pray only unto them as unto intercessors betwixt Christ and us, I demand what commandment or example there is in Scripture to warrant us to pray at all, or to give thanks at all unto them. Jacob, say they, prayed unto an angel, Gen. xlvi. 16. If he had prayed unto a created angel, this had not proved aught for invocation of saints. But it was unto that uncreated angel of the covenant, even Christ Jesus, with whom he had wrestled and prevailed, that he prayed unto, as both the circumstances of that place and conference of it with other places prove. Well, say they, Moses praying, Exod. xxxii. 13, and saying thus, ‘ Remember

* Qu. ‘practice’?—ED.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants,' hoped to have his prayers heard by the merits of those holy men. But it is most plain by that place that Moses pleadeth not the merits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but only presseth the covenant and promise made with them, as the words immediately following shew, where it is said, 'to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst,' &c. Yea, but, say they, the place in the Apocalypso proveth most plainly that the saints in heaven do offer up the prayers of the saints on earth, where it is said, Rev. v. 8, that 'the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having golden phials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.' But this place maketh no more to this purpose than the rest, for, 1, it is a vision, and nothing so done as here is set down, and therefore no clear argument will hence be drawn. Again, here is nothing spoken of the saints in heaven, for it is generally agreed upon that the twenty-four elders represent the church militant here on earth, whose conversation is in heaven, whose golden phials full of sweet odours were their own prayers, poured out of faithful hearts unto the Lord. Lastly, they say that praying one unto another here on earth, to be assisted in their prayers, is lawful, therefore prayer unto saints in heaven is lawful. But to this we answer, 1, that to desire one another's prayers is warranted by the word, which they grant; but to request the prayers of the saints departed hath no warrant in the word, howsoever they contend the contrary. 2. There is no such reason of desiring the prayers of the saints in heaven, as of desiring one another's prayers, for we know one another's necessities, but they know not our necessities, as hath been proved. 3. Our praying one for another to be holpen by their prayers, is a godly request to our brethren, but no religious invocation of them, as by their merits or worthiness to be brought into God's favour, such as is prayer unto saints. And as we are in a Christian sort to give thanks one unto another for benefits received, so are we in a Christian sort to request one another's prayers. But that religious thanksgiving and that religious invocation whereof we now speak are in no sort due to any but to God. So that the saints departed, not knowing what we say or think, nor giving either grace or glory to us, nor any way warranted by the Scriptures to have such honour given unto them, we conclude that we are not to pray or to give thanks to them.

Nay, absolutely, we say that it is utterly unlawful to pray or give thanks to them. For, 1, prayer and thanksgiving are honours only due unto the Lord, and therefore he saith, Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;' praise me, give thanks unto me. Where, albeit the word *only* be not expressed, but it be said, 'Call upon me,' &c.; as neither it is expressed in Deuteronomy, but said, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; and thou shalt serve him,' chap.

x. 20; yet as our Saviour Christ sheweth, that it is thereto be understood by his adding of it, and saying, 'Him *only* shalt thou serve,' Mat. iv. 10, so is it plain that in this place, where the prophet speaketh of the same thing, it is understood as if he had said, 'Call upon me *only*, and I will deliver thee; and thou shalt glorify me *only*.' Therefore it is utterly unlawful either to pray or to give thanks unto the saints, unless we will communicate that to others which belongeth unto him, and so make 'other gods beside him,' and with him, contrary to the commandment, Exod. xx. 3, 23. 2. It is unlawful to believe in them, which they will grant; therefore unlawful to pray or to give thanks unto them. For so it is written, Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' 3. To pray unto saints is injurious unto Christ, who is ordained the only mediator between God and us, 1 Tim. ii. 5, who 'sitteth at the right hand of God, and maketh continual request for us,' Rom. viii. 34; unto whom we may 'go boldly,' Heb. iv. 16, and for whose sake, 'whatsoever we ask the Father in his name, he giveth it us,' John xvi. 23. Many other arguments of like weight might here be brought to the same purpose. But these for this time may suffice.

Neither let any man think that because we thus teach, we make not that reckoning of the saints departed which we ought. Yes, beloved, of the blessed Virgin Mary we say, that she was blessed above other women, that she was dearly beloved of God, that she was adorned with excellent gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit, and that her memory is to be reverenced for ever. And of all the saints departed, we say that their memory is blessed, and that they are to be commended unto the church, that by their doctrine and examples others may be strengthened in true faith, and inflamed to follow true godliness; yea, and that in a general desire both for us and for themselves, and for all the elect of God; they pray that the day of our refreshing were come, and that all the people of God were joined in one, and that their enemies were vanquished and destroyed. And, farther, that it may be that God sometimes may reveal some things in particular unto them at his pleasure, and as it seemeth good unto him. Only as the Holy Ghost hath taught us, so we teach you, that in the word is nothing written whereby to prove that they know our affairs in particular, that they pray for us in particular, or that they do anything for us in particular; and therefore that we are not to pray unto them, or to give thanks unto them, but only to the Lord, to whom alone that honour is due. 'Give thanks therefore, O Israel, unto God the Lord, in the congregations, from the ground of thine heart,' Ps. lxviii. 26. Pray unto the Lord, as David did, Ps. lv. 17, 'evening and morning, and at mid-day,' and that instantly. As your occasions are for blessings in good things, or deliverance from evil, so let your requests be shewn unto God in prayer and supplication, with giving of

thanks. Yea, in the midst of troubles give thanks unto the Lord, that ye are not overcome of them, and pray unto the Lord that he will give you patience in them. And amongst all things, give thanks unto the Lord for that fellowship which ye have with other churches in the gospel; and pray unto the Lord that ye may continue in that grace wherein ye stand, through the gospel of your salvation unto your lives' end.

And I am persuaded. As before the apostle testified his love toward the Philippians, by his rejoicing on their behalf for the grace of God already bestowed on them, so now likewise he testifieth his love towards them, by signification of his assured hope of God's farther mercy towards them, in the perseverance in the same grace unto the end. Where, 1, he signifieth his assured hope of their perseverance, ver. 6. 2. He setteth down the reason which caused him so assuredly to hope thereof; namely, their piety and his love of them, ver. 7. 3. He maketh earnest protestation of his love towards them, ver. 8. For the first, the apostle sheweth his great confidence and assured hope of their perseverance, when he saith, 'I am persuaded of this same thing,' &c. And closely he implies a reason of his confidence, drawn from the constant immutability of God in his doings, when he saith, that 'he which hath begun,' &c., for it is as if he had thus reasoned. God is constant in his doings, so that look what he beginneth, that he finisheth, therefore I am persuaded that he which hath begun this good work, &c. Now it is to be noted that the apostle saith not, I am persuaded that *God*, which hath, &c., but that '*he* which hath begun; whereby he implies that the beginning of that, as also indeed of every good work, was alone from God, for if it had been from any other, then they should not have understood him to have spoken of God, when he said, that *he*. Again, it is to be noted, that the apostle saith not, I am persuaded that you which have begun well, shall also end well, but 'that he which hath begun,' &c., grounding his persuasion not on their virtue and constancy, but on the constant immutability of God, which hath begun a good work in them. Now the good work which he had begun in them was their embracing of the gospel, whereby they had fellowship in the gospel with other churches, which was indeed a special good work, and such as they that persecute them in whom God hath begun this good work, make but vain brags of their good works. I am then, saith the apostle, persuaded that he that hath begun this good work in you, of embracing the gospel, will perform it, *i.e.* will confirm and establish you in it, or will finish and perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ, when he shall come and change your vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. For albeit by the day of Christ might be meant the day wherein the faithful die in Christ, yet by the day of Christ I rather understand here the day of Christ his second coming in the flesh in the last day, as also it

is understood in the next chapter, ver. 16, because the apostle speaketh not only of them that then were at Philippi, but of the church also which afterward should be there until the second coming of Christ. Thus much of the sense of the words.

The first thing, then, which here I note, is the ground of the apostle's confidence of the Philippians' perseverance. His ground is, not the Philippians' virtue and constancy, as if now they were so well grounded and established in the faith that they could not but hold out and keep fast their good profession unto the end; but his ground is the constant immutability of God, who, where he beginneth to work a good work, there he maketh an end of it. Whence I observe a notable ground of the perseverance of all God's faithful children in that grace wherein they stand. And that is this, he that hath begun a good work in them will perform it, and confirm them unto the end. To which purpose also there are many other places in the holy Scripture; as where it is said of Christ Jesus, John xiii. 1, that 'forasmuch as he loved his own which were in the world, unto the end he loved them.' Whence we take that commonly received saying, that whom God loveth once, he loveth unto the end. And again, where Christ himself saith, John iv. 14, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never be more athirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' Here is but once drink, and never thirst, once sanctified by the Spirit, and never utterly forsaken of the Spirit. And again, where John saith, 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' namely unto death. And why? 'Because the seed of God remaineth in him;' the Spirit of God having once seized upon him, always abideth in him. And again, where our Saviour saith, John vi. 37, 'Him that cometh to me I cast not away;' once come by by faith, no fear of forsaking afterward. And the reason is plain. For 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,' Rom. xi. 29. He calleth us by his gospel, and giveth us gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit, not for our own sakes, or for anything that he seeth or foreseeth in us,—for then we might well fear a fall and a change,—but his gifts are given freely by grace according to his good pleasure. So that he never repenteth of any grace which he bestoweth upon us, nor suffereth his mercies to fail from us for ever, but holdeth our souls in life, and keepeth us from the pit of destruction. Whereupon, we read that as David, having had experience of God's help, in his deliverance out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, afterwards feared not to encounter Goliath, but assured himself that 'the Lord that had delivered him out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, would also deliver him out of the hand of that Philistine,' 1 Sam. xvii. 37. So the children of God having once felt the love of God in Christ Jesus in their souls, and the

testimony of the Spirit ‘witnessing unto their spirits that they were the sons of God’; afterwards feared not the encounters of sin or Satan, but assured themselves that nothing should be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. So we see that our apostle breaketh out and saith, Rom. viii. 35–39, ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ And again, 2 Tim. i. 12, ‘I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him,’ which is myself, ‘against that day.’ And thus, many others of God’s children, as upon other grounds, so in assurance of God’s unchangeable resolution in his doings, have builded a full and assured persuasion of their perseverance.

Now we must understand that, in perseverance, there be two things, which you may call the parts of it. The one is a holy will and desire to persevere in that grace wherein we stand, the other is a real continuance and continual persisting in the grace wherein we stand. This real continuance and continual persisting in the grace wherein we stand, is often in the best of God’s children so abated and diminished, that it seemeth utterly to be extinguished; but that holy will and desire to persevere, the Lord doth never suffer utterly to fail from his children. Take, for example, the holy prophet David, and the blessed apostle Paul. Did not David, in the bitterness of his soul, cry, Ps. lxxvii. 7–9, ‘Will the Lord absent himself for ever, and will he be no more entreated? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, and is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure?’ And again, Ps. lxxxviii. 14–16, ‘Lord, why abhorrest thou my soul, and hiddest thy face from me? Lord, where are thy old loving-kindnesses? Thy terrors do I suffer with a troubled mind, thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me, and the fear of thee hath undone me.’ His real continuance, ye see, seemeth to be cut off, and himself to be separated from the Lord; but by his groanings and cries it appeareth that his holy desire still remained. Paul’s care, likewise, was interrupted, and his real continuance remitted, when he was so exalted through ‘the abundance of revelation,’ 2 Cor. xii. 7, that ‘there was given unto him a prick in the flesh, even the messenger of Satan to buffet him;’ yet, ver. 8, in that he then ‘besought the Lord thrice that that messenger of Satan might depart from him,’ it appeareth that this his holy desire still remained. And this holy desire of persevering is it which the Lord accepteth, and then is he said to give us this grace of

perseverance, when he giveth us a perpetual will and desire of persevering in that grace wherein we stand, howsoever the very act of persevering, by sin, temptation, or other trouble, seem to be cut off and quite failed sometimes even in the dearest of God’s children.

Here, then, is a notable comfort for the broken and contrite heart, for the humbled and afflicted soul. For tell me, O thou distressed soul, hath the Spirit sometimes witnessed unto thy spirit that thou wast the child of God? Hath the love of God sometimes been so shed abroad in thine heart, that thou hast verily persuaded thyself of the love of God towards thee? Hast thou sometimes been delighted in the law of thy God, and felt the sweet comforts of God in Christ Jesus in thy soul? Why, then, is now thy soul so heavy? and why is it so disquieted within thee? Why do thoughts arise in thy heart, and why doth the sleep depart from thine eyes? Oh wait upon the Lord, and put thy trust in him, for he that hath begun a good work in thee will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus. He hath said it by his holy apostle, and shall he not do it? ‘The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent,’ 1 Sam. xv. 29. He hath begun a good work in thee, even of his love and his mercy towards thee, and as himself, so his love is unchangeable, so that whom he loveth once, he loveth unto the end. Oh, but therefore thou art troubled, because he doth not seem to continue his loving-kindness towards thee. Thou feelest not that joy in the Holy Ghost, that comfort in God’s love, which thou wast wont to find; thou art even dead unto the life of God. Well, did not David cry out, ‘Lord, where are thy old loving-kindnesses, where are thy former mercies?’ Did he not pray, ‘Restore me to the joy of thy salvation, and renew a right spirit within me?’ And again, ‘Oh quicken me according to thy word, quicken me according to thy loving-kindness.’ So that thou seest ‘there hath no temptation taken thee, but such as appertaineth to man,’ even such as have overtaken men after God’s own heart. But tell me, doth it not grieve thee that thou doest not feel that assurance, that comfort, that joy that thou wast wont to find in thy God through Jesus Christ? Doest thou not desire and long to feel that assurance, and comfort, and joy that thou wast wont to find in thy soul? Oh yes; it is thy doubtings that trouble thee, and comfort which thou longest for. Well, then, good enough. It is a broken and contrite heart, that grieveth at his sins, that grieveth at his wants, that the Lord loveth, Ps. li. 17; and a troubled spirit, troubled at the cogitation of his slips and imperfections, is a sacrifice acceptable unto him. And again, this holy desire of any grace is the grace itself. A desire of comfort is a great part of comfort, and a desire of persevering is a chief part of perseverance; and he that desireth any grace of God tending to salvation shall surely have it. For so Christ hath promised, saying, Rev. xxi. 6, ‘I will give to him that is athirst of the well

of the water of life freely,' which is the same with that in the prophet, where it is said, Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and ye that have no silver, come, buy, and eat; come, I say, buy wine and milk, without silver and without money.'

Comfort, then, yourselves, be of good comfort in the Lord, all ye that thirst after and desire the things that belong unto your peace. Let not your sins, or your wants and imperfections, too much cast you down or dismay you. What if he will have you to sail by hell to heaven? He that continueth this holy desire

in you will not suffer his mercies utterly to fail from you for ever. Heaviness may endure for a night, for a short season, but joy cometh in the morning; after a while heaviness is turned into joy, and sackcloth into the garment of gladness. Where he hath begun he will make an end, and scattering this cloud, he will shew unto thee the light of his holy countenance. In the mean time, let that holy desire which is in thee be a pledge of his love unto thee, and assure thyself he shall fulfil all thy heart's desire, and restore thee to thy wonted joys again.

LECTURE VI.

As it becometh me so to judge of you all, because I have you in remembrance, that both in my bands, and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel, you all were partakers of my grace.—PHILIP. I. 7.

THE second thing which here I note is, that God, and God only, had begun that good work of embracing the gospel in them, and would (as the apostle was persuaded) perform it unto the end. For once it is plain that the apostle meaneth that God had begun this work in them, and would perform it unto the end; and in that he saith not, I am persuaded that God, but that he which hath begun, &c., he plainly implieth that God only begun that good work in them, and would perform it unto the end. For if any other but he only had intermeddled therein, how should the Philippians have plainly understood the apostle to speak of God, when he said that he, &c. *He*, if any other had had any hand herein, might as well be understood of that other as of God. Hence, then, I observe that both the beginning and the perfecting of our obedience to the gospel, and indeed of every good work in us, is only from God. And to this the writings of the Holy Ghost everywhere agree. The apostle, speaking in general, saith, 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' No gift, no grace, no good at all, but we receive it from God. Be it the beginning, or the perfecting, or what it may be, if it be good, we receive it from God. Our blessed Saviour, speaking more particularly of faith in Christ Jesus, and an holy confession of his name, saith, Mat. xvi. 17, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' Faith in Christ Jesus, and an holy confession of his name, are not the fruits of man's wisdom, but they are the special gifts of God our heavenly Father. And speaking of obedience to the gospel, he saith, John vi. 44, 'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' No coming unto Christ, no obedience unto his will, unless we be drawn and haled against our wills, and of unwilling be made willing. And therefore the spouse in the Canticles calls upon her bridegroom, Christ Jesus, and saith unto him, 'Draw me, and we will run after thee,' chap. i. 4. Till he draw us, we run not after him in whole or in

part, but indeed we run from him; but when he draws us by his cords, even by the preaching of his gospel, and of unwilling makes us willing, then we run after him. Have we, then, no good thing but which we receive from God? Doth not flesh and blood reveal any mystery of our salvation unto us? Can we not come unto Christ unless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ draw us? If, then, we come unto Christ, and obey his gospel, it is wholly from God. If we believe or understand anything in the way of godliness, it is wholly from the illumination of God's Spirit. If in us there be anything that is good, it is wholly the gift of God bestowed on us. He only hath the interest, both in the beginning and in the increase of it in us; which also yet further appeareth by this, in that we give thanks unto God for our calling into the fellowship which we have in the gospel, and for all other his works of mercy on us; and in that we pray unto God for increase in all knowledge and judgment, and for every grace of his Spirit which he knoweth to be needful for us. For whatsoever it is wherefor we give thanks unto the Lord, thereby we acknowledge that we have received it from the Lord, and whatsoever it is wherefor we pray unto the Lord, thereby we acknowledge that it is to be received from the Lord, as every man knoweth by the nature of thanksgiving and of praise. Do we, then, well in giving thanks unto God for our calling into the fellowship of the gospel, and for other good things begun in us? Do we well to pray unto God that he will increase our obedience to the gospel, and whatsoever good grace he hath begun in us? Do we well to give thanks unto God for the beginning, and to pray unto God for the perfecting, of every good work in us? If we do not well herein, then our apostle did not well in this place thus to do on the Philippians' behalf, and his example hath deceived us. But if we do well herein, then is both the beginning and increase and perfecting of our obedience to the gospel, and of every good work in us, only from the Lord, who is all in all

things, 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,' as in regard of his majesty, so in regard of all creatures; from whom, as all creatures have their beginning, continuance, and support, so have all good graces their beginning, increase, and perfection from him.

Howbeit here you must understand that when we thus teach, that both the beginning and increase, and perfecting of our obedience to the gospel, and of every good work in us, is only from God, we do not either make the ministration of the gospel to be of none effect, or transform ourselves into blocks and stones; for albeit he only begin, increase, and perfect in us our obedience to the gospel, and of every good grace that is wrought in us, yet doth he not this immediately by himself, but he doth it by means. He doth it, but he useth the ministry of his servants in the preaching of the gospel to effect it. He giveth increase, but by the planting of Paul, and watering of Apollos, as it is written, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 'I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase;' he reconcileth his children unto himself, but by the word of reconciliation which he hath committed to us his children, as it is written, 2 Cor. v. 18, 'All things are of God, which hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation;' he revealeth his truth unto his children, but by his ministers, unto whom he revealeth his truth, that they may preach it unto us, as it is written, Gal. i. 6, 'When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I should preach him among the Gentiles,' &c. And, therefore, as it is said, Eph. ii. 8, that faith is the gift of God, so is it also said, Rom. x. 17, that faith is by hearing, even hearing of the word preached, so that his gift is given by the ministry of the word preached. And as it is said, Rom. vi. 23, that 'eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord,' so is it also said, Rom. i. 16, that 'the gospel is the power of God,' or the powerful instrument of God, 'unto salvation unto every one that believeth,' so that the preaching of the gospel is the ordinary instrument of God whereby he giveth salvation and eternal life to every one that believeth. We do not therefore make the ministration of the gospel to be of none effect, when we say that God only beginneth this, and every good work in us, and also increaseth and perfecteth it in us; but rather we magnify the ministration of the gospel, inasmuch as we say that he only doth this but by the ministration of the gospel, as the ordinary instrument of his Spirit.

Neither when we thus teach do we transform men into blocks and stones, as though they had no power or faculty in themselves at all to work, for we know that the natural man hath understanding and will, whereby he differeth not only from stocks and stones, but from brute beasts. But what is his understanding, and what is his will, till he be renewed by the Spirit of God? His understanding is full of darkness and

ignorance, and his will full of wickedness and vanity. He understandeth, but not the things of the Spirit of God, as it is written, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' nay, his understanding and wisdom is 'enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' Rom. viii. 7. Likewise he willetteth, but not anything that is good, as it is written, Gen. vi. 5, 'All the imaginations of the thoughts of man's heart are only evil continually,' and, Rom. iii. 18, 'there is no fear of God before his eyes.' This then is it which we say, that man, before he be renewed by the Spirit of grace, hath no power or faculty at all; I say not to work or do ought at all, for this were indeed to transform him into a stock or stone, but to do anything that is good, for 'it is God,' and God only, 'that worketh in him both the good will and the good deed, even of his good pleasure,' Phil ii. 13. He enlightens the eyes of our understanding, and corrects our froward wills, and then being renewed by the Spirit, we understand the things of the Spirit of God, and we will the things that are good, and we run the way of God's commandments, but ever with this necessary limitation, only by God. He maketh us understand, and will, and run as we ought, and we understand, and will, and run as we ought.

Here then, first, learn to beware of such as either tell you that man is able of himself to keep the law, and to merit everlasting life, a gross and now outworn error, I hope; or that man is able of himself to begin that is good, howsoever he be not able to perfect it but by the help of the Lord; or that man, being prevented by grace, is then able, by the help of grace aiding his weak nature, to work out his own salvation, for all these errors, as Dagon, must needs fall to the ground before this testimony of the Spirit, and doctrine of the Holy Ghost. 'The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the apostle, saith that it is God which hath begun a good work in us, and that he which hath begun it will go forward with it, and perform it unto the end. What, then, if a man shall tell yon that it is in man both to begin and perfect that which is good? or that it is in man to begin that is good, though not to perfect it? or that it is in man, by the help only of God, to do that is good? 'Let God be true, and every man a liar, that he may be justified in his words, and overcome when he is judged,' Rom. iii. 4. Neither beginning, nor ending, nor increase of anything that is good, is of ourselves as of ourselves; but he beginneth, and he which beginneth performeth and perfecteth, and none but he, even God only. It is the mere and only grace and mercy of God, not which aideth our nature being weakened, but which changeth it altogether in quality, bringing us out of darkness into light, out of the power of Satan unto God, and translating us from the death of sin unto the

life of righteousness in Christ Jesus. It is the mere and only grace of God, not which maketh an end of our salvation alone, but wherein our salvation wholly doth consist. Let no man, therefore, through vain and flattering words, deceive you, as if you yourselves were somewhat, when indeed you are nothing; but learn, and know, and ever hold this for a sure ground, that God only beginneth, increaseth, and perfecteth our obedience to the gospel, and every good work in us.

2. Let the minister and preacher of the word hence learn what he may assume unto himself in the fruits of his labours by the work of his ministry. Are his people reconciled unto God, brought unto the obedience of the gospel, begotten in the faith of Christ Jesus, grounded and stablished in the truth, instructed in the way of God perfectly? &c. He is not to take this honour unto himself, as if he had done these things: for this hath God only done, and it is his work, as it is written, Isa. liv. 13; John vi. 45, 'and they shall be all taught of God.' If we be taught in the word, he hath taught us by his Spirit; if we believe in Christ, it is his gift by his Spirit; if we be reconciled unto God, he hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, &c. He, I say, doth all things, only not immediately by himself, but by the ministry of his servants. And albeit he, because he worketh not by his Spirit but by the ministry of his servants, sometimes vouchsafe them this honour, that they beget men through the gospel, and that they save them that hear them, yet is this only his work, and only vouchsafed by him unto them, because in this work he useth the work of their ministry. Let not the minister, then, dare to assume unto himself that honour which only belongeth unto the Lord. This is his honour, that in the great work of man's salvation he useth his ministry, and by him as his instrument worketh what he will. Let this, therefore, be his glory and rejoicing, that the Lord by his means will save his people, and bring them to that inheritance which lasteth for ever in the heavens; and let him so speak as his minister out of his word, that so he may be indeed a means to turn many to righteousness.

3. Hence you may learn in what account and regard yeare to have the ministers of Christ Jesus. True, and most true it is, as already ye have heard, that God only beginneth every good work in us, and likewise confirmeth and strengtheneth us, and maketh us to abound therein more and more. But he doth it, as also ye have heard, by their ministry whom he hath separated for the gathering together of the saints, and for the edification of the body of Christ. Ye are therefore so to think of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and disposers of the secrets of God, by whom he hath appointed to open your eyes, that ye may 'turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that ye may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus,'

by whom he hath appointed to reveal his will unto you, and to fill you with the graces of his Holy Spirit, and by whom he hath appointed to bring to pass all the good pleasure of his will in you. And if any man think not thus of us, it is because he knoweth us not, neither him that hath sent us, nor what great works the Lord worketh, what great mercies the Lord sheweth unto his children by us. But let this for this time serve to stir up and to warn your pure minds, that ye so think of us as ye ought, and as it becometh them that are taught in the word, to have them which labour among you, and admonish you, in singular love and reverence for their work's sake.

The third thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith, that he was persuaded that he that had begun this good work of embracing the gospel in them, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ; or, as he speaketh to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. i. 8, would 'confirm them in it unto the end, that they might be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Whence two doubts may be moved not unworthy the answering. The one is, how one man may be persuaded of another man's perseverance or salvation, what a kind of persuasion it is which is of another's perseverance or salvation. The other is, whether the Lord performed this work of the Philippians' continuance in the fellowship which they had in the gospel, until the day of Jesus Christ, as the apostle was persuaded he would. To speak first unto this latter, most lamentable it is, but most true it is, that in those places where sometimes the name of the Lord was called upon, and the gospel of Christ Jesus freely and sincerely preached, not only at Philippi, but in many other churches which the apostles had planted in Macedonia, and elsewhere, there now, through the secret but just judgment of God, barbarous Turkism and abominable paganism hath taken possession, and holdeth it at his will. But as we understand this place of the apostle, so we are to make answer to the doubt; for if we understand the apostle's persuasion to be touching the church that then presently was at Philippi, that the Lord would continue them in the fellowship of the gospel until the day of Jesus Christ, i. e. until their death, when they should be translated into his kingdom of glory, I take it that it may very well be presumed, and safely averred, that the Lord performed this work of the Philippians' continuance in the fellowship which they had in the gospel until the day of Christ Jesus, as the apostle was persuaded he would; for such was their love and liberality towards the apostle, and such their constant abiding in the truth from the first day until then, that as the apostle thereupon was persuaded that the Lord would confirm them in that grace wherein they stood unto their end, so we thereupon may persuade ourselves that the Lord did confirm them therein unto the end. But if we understand the apostle's persuasion to be touching the church successively at Philippi, that the

Lord would continue that church in all ages in the fellowship of the gospel until the day of Jesus Christ, *i.e.* until his second coming to judgment, then may it seem that the apostle failed in his persuasion, because of their subjection, now a long time, unto the Turk. But even here also, it may be said that, as when the apostle wrote, the Philippians shined as lights in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation; so now, also, in that hellish thraldom unto the Turk, the Lord hath a church there, though not so eminent as sometimes it was, yet a church. For, as at the first, the apostles were sent as sheep in the midst of wolves, and as it may be hoped that Christ hath his church even in the midst of Romish Egypt, so may it also be hoped that he hath his church in that heathenish tyranny of the Turk, and even in the city of Philippi. But I now rather approve the former answer, as better agreeing with the circumstances of this Scripture, whereby it seemeth that the apostle speaketh of them that then were at Philippi.

Now, for answer unto the second doubt, which is, how one man may be persuaded of another man's perseverance or salvation, we must understand that there is a threefold persuasion. One grounded upon the testimony of the Spirit unto our spirit, whereby we do most certainly persuade ourselves of whatsoever grace is sealed unto us by the earnest of the Spirit. And this persuasion is most certain; but this persuasion we cannot have of any other, but only of ourselves, forasmuch as this ariseth of the testimony of the Spirit unto our spirit. Another persuasion there is, grounded upon the constant immutability of God in his doings, whereby we certainly persuade ourselves, that whatsoever good work God hath begun in us, he will confirm it unto the end. And a third persuasion there is, grounded upon charity, whereby we persuade ourselves of grace, where we see obedience to the gospel, constant abiding in the truth, patience in troubles, love of the brethren, and the like. Now one man cannot be persuaded of another man's perseverance or salvation, by the first kind of persuasion, grounded upon the testimony of the Spirit, because no man knoweth what the Spirit witnesseth unto another's spirit, but only to his own. But both by the second kind of persuasion, grounded upon the constancy of the Lord, and likewise by the third, grounded upon charity, one man may be persuaded of another man's perseverance or salvation. By the first kind of persuasion, the apostle was persuaded of his own salvation, when he said, Rom. viii. 38, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels,' &c.; and so every one of us, upon the like ground, may persuade ourselves of our own perseverance and salvation. By the second and third kinds of persuasion, the apostle was persuaded of the Philippians' perseverance and salvation, as in this place we see; and so every one of us, upon the like grounds, may be persuaded one of another's perseverance and salvation. The first

never faileth, because the testimony of God's Spirit, whereon it is grounded, is ever true. The second likewise never faileth, because God's purposes are ever unchangeable, and with him is no variableness, neither shadowing by turning. The third hath a wonderful great probability, but may fail, because it leaneth on the outward fruits of the Spirit in man, whose heart none knoweth, but he that searcheth it. The first is not here mentioned; the second is mentioned, ver. 6; and the third hath his ground, ver. 7. For a full answer, then, unto the second doubt, we say that one man may be persuaded of another man's perseverance and salvation, both by the second and third kinds of persuasion; and farther, that of whose perseverance and salvation we are persuaded by the third kind of persuasion, of his perseverance and salvation also we are to be persuaded by the second kind of persuasion, *i.e.* of whose perseverance and salvation we may conceive a good persuasion by the fruits of the Spirit in them, of them we are certainly to be persuaded that God will never leave them, or forsake them, but confirm them unto the end. And thus I resolve upon the reason which the apostle setteth down of his persuasion, grounded on the constant immutability of God in his doings; for what saith the apostle? 'As it becometh me,' saith he, &c. It becometh me, saith the apostle, so to judge of you, even to be persuaded that he that hath begun this work in you, &c. And why did it become him so to judge, so to be persuaded? 'Because,' saith he, 'I have you in remembrance,' because I gladly remember this of you, 'that both in my bands,' &c., *i.e.* that whether I were bound for the gospel, or defended the gospel at Nero his bar, or confirmed the gospel by my sufferings, you all were partakers of my grace, and were in a sort with me in my bands, and in my defence, and confirmation of the gospel. I know there are great diversities of interpretations of this text of Scripture; but, judging this to be most simple, I will not trouble you with any other. The reason, then, of that his persuasion of them was this, because such was the Philippians' zeal for the gospel, and love of him, that howsoever it were with him, whether he were bound for the gospel, or defended the gospel, or confirmed the gospel, they stuck close unto him, and took part with him both in his bands, and in his defence, and confirmation of the gospel.

The first thing, then, which here I note is, that the apostle saith, that it became him so to judge of the Philippians, so to be persuaded of them as he said verse 6, because of their zeal for the gospel and love of him. Whence I observe, that it becometh us certainly to be persuaded of their perseverance and salvation, and that they are the children of God, in whom we see obedience to the gospel, zeal for the truth, love of the brethren, true signs of godliness, evident fruits of the Spirit. That in charity we are every man to hope the best one of another, the apostle

plainly sheweth, when he saith, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, that ‘charity believeth all things, charity hopeth all things.’ Charity believeth all things, therefore in charity we are not to suspect the worst, but to believe the best one of another. Charity hopeth all things, therefore in charity we are not to mistrust the worst, but to hope the best one of another. Neither only so, when there are such outward tokens of grace and godliness, as ought easily to cause us to believe and hope the best one of another; but so also when there are not so plain tokens of grace, so manifest fruits of the Spirit. Nay, when there are manifest tokens of want of grace, fearful tokens of being given up into a reprobate mind, yet are we not to despair of such a one, but to leave him unto the Lord, unto whom he standeth or falleth. Witness the apostle, where he saith, Rom. xiv. 4, ‘Who art thou that condemnest another man’s servant? he standeth or falleth to his own master.’ There hope the best we cannot, and yet condemn him or despair of him we may not. Now, as in charity we may not despair of any, but hope well where all is not well, and persuade ourselves the best where we see the outward tokens of the Spirit, so where we have just cause of this persuasion by the true fruits of righteousness, we are certainly to be persuaded that they are the children of God; which, as it appeareth by this place of our apostle, so also by that where he saith of the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 4, that he knew that they were the elect of God, drawing one argument from the effectual preaching of the gospel amongst them, ver. 5, and another from their obedience to the gospel, ver. 6, so that where we see these and the like tokens of grace and godliness, there we are after the apostle’s example to be certainly persuaded, and to know that they are the elect children of God. Degrees I know there are in certainty of persuasion and knowledge;

for no man can be so certainly persuaded, so certainly know another man’s salvation, another man’s adoption into the sons of God as his own, because besides all other grounds which he hath or can have touching others, he hath the testimony of the Spirit witnessing unto his spirit that he is the child of God, and that his salvation is sure. Yet may be, and he is certainly to be persuaded, where he seeth a good work begun, ‘that he that hath begun,’ &c.

A good lesson for many of us to learn; for so crooked and ill affected are we commonly one towards another, as that we will easily persuade ourselves the worst one of another, but seldom persuade ourselves the best one of another. Though we see many great tokens of God’s graces in our brethren, if we see any infirmity or offence in them, we grate upon that, and we could be well persuaded of them but for that, which, if it might have stopped the apostle’s persuasion of the Philippians, he should never have been so well persuaded of them as he was; for among them there were murmurings and reasonings, and many things done through contention and vain glory; yet, looking upon their obedience to the gospel, their constant abiding in the truth, their Christian love of him, he persuadeth himself the best of them, even ‘that he that hath begun,’ &c. So, beloved, howsoever we see slips and infirmities in our brethren, yea, though sometimes we see them fall flat to the ground, yet if we see the manifest tokens of God’s graces in them, let us persuade ourselves the best of them, yea, let us persuade ourselves of them as of ourselves, that they are the children of God, and that their salvation is surely sealed in the heavens; for so it becometh us to judge of them after the example of our apostle, because of the fruits of the Spirit in them.

LECTURE VII.

Because I have you in remembrance, that both in my bands, and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel, you all were partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how I long after you all from the very heart root in Jesus Christ.—PHILIP. I. 7, 8.

THE second thing which here I note is the testimony which the apostle gives unto the Philippians of their zeal for the gospel, of their love of him, and of their growth in godliness, through the effectual preaching of the gospel amongst them, in that he saith, that ‘both in his bands, and in his defence and confirmation of the gospel, they all were partakers of his grace.’ This was a sure token that they had well profited in the school of Christ, in that whether the apostle were bound for the gospel, or defended the gospel, or confirmed the gospel, still they stuck close to him, and took part with him, and were, though they were absent from him, yet in zeal and in an holy affection, in some sort in bands with him, and in defence and confirma-

tion of the gospel with him. Hence, then, I observe a notable argument how we may have proof unto ourselves, and give also proof unto others, of our zeal for the gospel, of our love of the ministers of the gospel, by whom we have been taught in the word, of the power of the word in our hearts and souls, and of our growth in godliness through the preaching of the word. Is there any persecution of the gospel of Jesus Christ by any cruel tyrants, Pope, Turk, or Spaniard, or any other? Are your ministers and teachers attached, and brought before any bloody inquisition for the gospel’s sake of Christ Jesus? Are they brought unto the bar there, as felons or traitors, to defend that truth which in all simplicity and sincerity they have taught amongst you?

Are they beaten, and scourged, and cast into prison, and bound with bands, and their feet made fast in the stocks, for the defence of the gospel? Are they brought to the fire and faggot, to the rope and hatchet, to lions and wild beasts, by their blood to confirm the gospel of Christ Jesus? Such times and tyrannies, beloved, our forefathers have seen, and it may be that some of you have seen them; but, O Lord, let never our eyes see such times and tyrannies again, neither let our seed see them, nor our seed's seed from henceforth for ever! But put case it were thus as hath been said: do ye think ye should stand close to the truth in such time of trouble, and not start aside like a broken bow? Could ye find in your hearts to undergo, with your ministers and teachers, the merciless cruelty of any bloody inquisition; to stand with them at the bar in defence of that trnht which they have taught you? To be tried with them by mockings and scourgings, by bonds and imprisonment; to go to fire and faggot with them, and with your blood to seal that truth which they have taught you? Here were zeal for the gospel indeed; here were love of your ministers; here were a proof of the power of the word in you; here were an argument of the effectual preaching of the gospel unto you. And such proofs and arguments many in the primitive church both had unto themselves and gave unto others, as the apostle witnesseth to the Hebrews, where he saith, Heb. xi. 36-38, that 'some were racked and would not be delivered, that they might receive a better resurrection; others were tried by mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover by bands and imprisonment; others were stoned,' &c. So powerfully had the word wrought upon them, that nothing could daunt them; but through persecution, and anguish, and tribulation, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, and all they went.

Yea, but you will say there was no such matter with the Philippians, whose example I urge; they gave no such proof of their zeal, or love, or growth in godliness through the preaching of the gospel, as now we speak of. Well, then, could ye willingly be partakers, with your ministers and teachers, in their bands, and in their defence and confirmation of the gospel, in such sort as the Philippians were with Paul? Would ye not be ashamed of their chains? Would ye communicate to their affliction, and supply that which they lacked? Would ye be careful that some might minister unto them such things as they wanted? Would their bands so affect you as if ye were bound with them? Would ye count their sufferings for the defence and confirmation of the gospel, as common to you with them? Would ye in heart and soul be joined unto them, both in their bands and in their defence and confirmation of the gospel? This also should be a notable proof, both unto yourselves and others, of your holy zeal for the trnht, of your godly increase in all spiritual understanding through the word, and of the effectual power of the Spirit in

you through the ministry of the word. Such a proof Onesiphorus had unto himself, and gave unto others, as appeareth by that testimony which the apostle giveth to him, when he saith, that he often refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chains; that at Rome he sought him very diligently, and found him; and that in many things he ministered unto him at Ephesus, 2 Tim. i. 16-18. Not once, but often, he refreshed him; he shunned him not, nor was ashamed of him because of his bands; but, coming to Rome, and understanding that Nero had cast him into prison, he sought him very diligently, and would not rest till he had found him; and before, at Ephesus, he had in bountiful sort cared for him. Here the word had taken root downward, and brought forth fruit upward, and powerfully wrought on him; and so the blessing that followed hereupon. The apostle prayed for him, saying, 'The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy with the Lord at that day,' ver. 18; nor for him only, but for his whole house, saying, 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus,' ver. 16; and in that the apostle prayed for him and for his house, it was in effect a promise of blessing and mercy unto him and to his house. The like testimony the apostle giveth unto the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 6, where he saith that 'they received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' When there was much affliction, when there was great tribulation and persecution because of the word, yet they received the word willingly and joyfully, which the apostle bringeth as a plain proof unto them of their spiritual conjunction with Christ, and election unto life. So that when the word hath wrought thus upon us, that in much affliction we can delight in it; that we gladly cherish and refresh them that suffer trouble even unto bands for the gospel's sake, that we are so affected therewith, as if we also were in bands with them, that we count their sufferings for the defence and confirmation of the gospel our sufferings, it is a notable argument that the word hath had great power in us, and that we have well profited in the school of Christ.

But if many in these our days should examine themselves by this rule, of what power the word is in them, and unto what growth in godliness they are come, it is to be feared that their trial would not be much to their comfort. Our blessed Saviour, expounding the parable of the sower, saith, that 'he that received seed in the stony ground, is he which heareth the word, and incontinently with joy receiveth it: yet hath he no root in himself, and endureth but a season; for as soon as tribulation or persecution cometh because of the word, by and by he is offended,' Mat. xiii. 21. And our apostle complained that, at his first answering, no man assisted him, but all forsook him, 2 Tim. iv. 16. Not to speak of those which refuse to hearken to instrnction, and to present themselves in our assemblies, is not much seed now

sown in stony ground? If tribulation and persecution should come because of the word, would not many of us be offended, and rather turn, as they say, than burn? If our Pauls and preachers should be brought to their answer in the defence of the gospel, would they be much assisted, or would they not be utterly forsaken? Yes, beloved, a great many of us that now give them reasonable good countenance, would be ashamed of their chains; a great many of us that now hear them patiently, would fear or disdain to look on them in their trouble. We think ourselves now reasonable good favourers of the word, and of the ministers thereof, if we be not enemies unto them. But if we come unto them and countenance them, then we think ourselves very forward indeed, and that the word hath much prevailed with us. And it were to be wished that the number of such were far greater than it is. But if a tempest should arise, so that our ship should be covered with waves, would not a great many of us wish ourselves out of that ship wherein we sailed, and in another that sailed in a more calm sea? If our ministers and teachers should be carried unto the Guildhall, there to answer in the defence of the gospel, would we not, as Christ's disciples did, forsake them and flee; and as Peter did, forswear them? Here would be indeed a trial of the power of the word in us. And how we would stand in this trial, may in part be conjectured by some present experience. For where the word and the ministers thereof are favoured, if the painful minister be poor and bare, because of his small portion and maintenance, how many of us will yield up our impropriations unto him, which properly belong unto him? Or if we have no such, how many of us will yield up unto him our covenant with him for our tithes? Or if we have no such, how many of us will take care that, by our defrauding him of any due, he be not poor or bare? Or, if we be not guilty herein, how many of us will join our heads and our purses together to increase his maintenance, for his encouragement and bettering of his estate? Likewise, if some popishly or naughtily affected bring him unjustly into trouble, how many of us will assist him, how many of us will go to the High Commission with him, how many of us will do our whole endeavour for him, how many of us will communicate unto his charges in such trouble? Do we fail in these less things, and would we hold in greater things? Will we not part with some of our living to him, and would we hazard our life with him? Will we not now assist him, and communicate to his charges in trouble, and would we then cleave close unto him, and communicate to his affliction? I leave it unto every man to think of it. For conclusion of this note, we see how we may have proof unto ourselves, and give proof unto others, of our zeal for the gospel, of our love of the ministers of the gospel, of the power of the word in us, and of our growth in godliness through the preaching of the word. Let

us therefore willingly and gladly take part, if need be, with our ministers and teachers in their bands, and in their defence and confirmation of the gospel; and in the mean time, let us give them what countenance and encouragement, what help and assistance we can, that so the power of the word in us, and our profiting thereby, may be testified both unto ourselves and to others.

The third thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith that all the Philippians were partakers of his grace, both in his bands, &c. They only relieved him, and refreshed him, and were careful for him, being in bands; and were, in their souls and affections, knit unto him, both in his bands and in his defence and confirmation of the gospel; and for this cause he saith, they were 'partakers of his grace in his bands,' &c. Whence I observe a good note of such as are joined in the communion of saints, and that is this; howsoever they abound in the measure of grace above others, yet in the grace they prefer not themselves before others. So we see the apostle Peter writeth to them that had obtained like precious faith with him, saying, 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to you which have obtained like precious faith with us,' &c., 2 Peter i. 1. In the measure of faith, no doubt, he excelled all them to whom he wrote, yet in the grace itself of faith, ye see he equalled them unto himself. So we see the apostle to the Hebrews saith unto them, 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,' &c., Heb. iii. 1. In measure of gifts by the heavenly calling, no doubt he was far before them to whom he wrote; yet touching the grace itself, he counteth them partakers with him of the heavenly vocation. And so our apostle, in the measure of sufferings, excelled not the Philippians only, but all others, yet in the grace itself, he saith, that they were 'partakers of his grace, both in his bands,' &c. And this is the blessing of the holy communion of saints, that they which are joined in this holy fellowship, willingly equal themselves unto them that are of meaner gifts, and do not stand upon their prerogatives, either in blessings or in sufferings, but as they that have one God, and one Lord, and one baptism, and one hope of their calling, so they esteem of others' graces as of their own.

Which may serve for a bridle unto such overweening spirits, as too hastily and sharply censure them that come short of themselves in the measure either of other blessings or of sufferings. For, to speak only of the latter sort, are not there some that so brag of their sufferings, that if others of their brethren come somewhat short of them, they condemn them for white-livered soldiers and faint-hearted brethren? And tell them that you were affected with their sufferings as if ye had suffered with them; that ye were not unmindful of them, but communicated unto their afflictions; will they count you partakers of their grace in their bands, or rather would they not tell you that

this is but cold charity in regard of that zealous courage which should be in you, and that this is nothing in comparison of their sufferings? So vain a thing is man, as to esteem best of other his own graces, so most of his own sufferings, and so to stand upon his own measure of grace, that he makes little reckoning of the same grace in meaner measure in others of his brethren. But we see the practice, both of our apostle and of others of the apostles, which may serve for our instruction in this point. Let us therefore, after their example, howsoever we abound in the measure of any grace, make reckoning of them in whom that grace is, as partakers of the same grace with us; for it is the same Spirit that giveth the same grace both unto us and others; and the same Spirit distributeth to every man severally the measure of grace as he will. Let us not, therefore, for our measure of grace, whatsoever it be,—be it in wisdom, learning, patience, suffering, or any other,—exalt ourselves above our brethren, but let us make much of the grace of the Spirit in them, and let us rejoice over them as having obtained the like precious grace with us.

The last thing which here I note is, that the apostle calleth his bands for the defence and confirmation of the gospel a grace, for so we understand that they were partakers of his grace, in that they were partakers of his bands for the defence and confirmation, &c. Whence I observe, that to suffer bands, imprisonment, persecution, and the like, for the gospel's sake, is a special grace and gift of God. So the apostle again, in the latter end of this chapter, affirmeth, saying, Philip. i. 29, 'Unto you it is given for Christ, that not only ye should believe in him, but also suffer for his sake.' Whence it is plain, that, as faith in Christ Jesus, so to suffer for his sake, is a special gift of God. And hereupon the apostles rejoiced when they were beaten, that they were 'counted worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ his name,' Acts v. 41. And our apostle rejoiceth as much in his sufferings as in anything, 2 Cor. xi. And why, but because they counted their sufferings as special gifts and graces upon them?

Where yet, first, we must note, that simply to suffer bands and imprisonment, persecution and trouble, is no grace or gift of God; but to suffer these things for Christ his sake, for the gospel's sake, for righteousness sake. And therefore Peter saith, 1 Peter iv. 15, 'Let no man suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters; but if any man suffer as a Christian,' i.e. for Christ his sake and the gospel's, 'let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf,' ver. 16. Secondly, that to suffer bands and persecution for Christ his sake and the gospel's, is no grace or gift of God in itself and in the nature of the thing, but only by way of consequent; for if to suffer bands or affliction for the gospel's sake were in itself, and in the nature of the thing, a grace and gift of God, then were we to pray for affliction and trouble for the gospel's

sake, as we do for other graces of the Spirit. But now no man doth pray to be tried and troubled, to be persecuted and imprisoned, for the gospel's sake, neither is any man so to pray, because this were indeed to tempt God. But our prayer is for strength, and patience, and help in trouble, whensover it shall please the Lord, by troubles for the gospel's sake, to try us, as the prayers of the godly at all times do show. To suffer bands, then, and trouble for the gospel's sake, is no grace of God in itself, but only in event and by consequent. For what is the event, fruit, and consequent of suffering for the gospel's sake? First, in respect of ourselves, it bringeth forth the fruits of patience, experience, and hope, as it is written, 'We rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation bringeth forth patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed,' Rom. v. 3. It is the means to make us like unto the Son of God, as it is written, Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom God knew before, he predestinate to be made like to the image of his Son;' where, by the order of our election, he sheweth that afflictions in general are the means to make us like unto the Son of God. And it causeth unto us eternal glory in the heavens, as it is written, Matt. v. 10–12, 'Blessed are they which suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, for my sake, falsely; rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' Again, in respect of God, by suffering trouble, bands, and death for the gospel's sake, God is glorified; as it is written, John xxi. 19, 'This spake Jesus unto Peter, signifying by what death he should glorify God.' And thereby also the power of Christ dwelleth in us, as it is written, 2 Cor. xii. 15, 'Very gladly will I rejoice in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me;' because the power of Christ is most seen in helping our infirmities, in loosing our bands, and delivering us out of troubles. And again, in respect of the church, by the sufferings of the saints for the gospel, many children are strengthened and many begotten unto the church, as it is written in this chapter afterward, Philip. i. 14, 'Many of the brethren in the Lord are boldened through my bands, and dare more frankly speak the word.' To which purpose, also it is said, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Because, then, of the grace which followeth our bands and troubles for the gospel's sake, both in respect of God and of his church, and of ourselves, therefore it is that they are called a grace and gift of God. So that to suffer bands and troubles for Christ his sake and the gospel's, is a grace and gift of God, not in the nature of the thing, but because of the grace given us constantly and patiently to endure those troubles, and because of the grace which issueth thence for the good of ourselves, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his church.

Yea, but if to suffer bands, and affliction, and trouble for Christ his sake and the gospel's, were a grace and gift of God any way, why should the children of God be often so much perplexed therat as they are? Why should they not always be more welcome unto them than they are? For answer whereunto, we must understand that, in the children of God, there is the flesh and the spirit, an outward man and an inward man. Are then the children of God often perplexed at their bands and sufferings, for Christ his sake and the gospel's? It may be in their flesh and outward man, but in their spirit and inward man they are always welcome unto them; as our apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Though our outward man perish,' and even sink under the burden of our afflictions, 'yet the inward man is renewed daily,' and made stronger and stronger through afflictions. And so we must understand all the places of Scripture where the saints seem to faint under their afflictions. David, in his Psalms, often complaineth of his troubles, no doubt because they were heavy unto his outward man; but unto his inward man they were so welcome, that he saith, Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes;' and again, ver. 67, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep thy word.' So our apostle saith, 2 Cor. i. 8, that he was 'pressed out of measure, passing strength through affliction,' so that his outward man, no doubt, was not able to sustain them; yet in his inward man he rejoiced in them, and boasted of them, and fainted not under them. So our blessed Saviour himself saith, Mat. xxvi. 38, 'My soul is very heavy, even unto the death;' so that by his own will he would have had that cup to pass from him; but knowing his Father's will, immediately he addeth, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' So that howsoever by our own wills we would avoid bands and troubles for the gospel's sake, as heavy and grievous unto our outward man; yet as our wills are sanctified by God's Spirit, and conformed unto God's will, so they are welcome unto us, and acknowledged by us to be a grace of God, given unto his children for their good and his glory.

Here then is a notable comfort for all such of God's children as suffer bands and affliction for Christ his sake and the gospel's. For what are their bands? They are the grace of God; and in suffering bands for the defence and confirmation of the gospel, they are partakers with the saints of their grace. And as here they are called 'the grace of God;' so elsewhere they are called 'the marks of the Lord Jesus,' Gal. vi. 17. Now, may it not be a great comfort unto us, to bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus? Yet, generally, we avoid bands and afflictions; nay, we murmur at them, nay, we mock at them, and hold them for simple men that will not rather turn than

burn; that will not rather renounce the truth, than endure such suffering for the truth. But tell me, should not he be judged foolish and ignorant that should avoid the gift of any grace? Should he not be thought ridiculous that should murmur or scorn to be marked with the marks of the Lord Jesus? And how then shall we think of him that refuseth or murmureth at bands and afflictions for Christ his sake, or that maketh a mock at them which do suffer afflictions for Christ his sake, which are the grace of God and the marks of the Lord Jesus? Beloved, we know not what bands and afflictions bide us for the gospel's sake. Surely for our sins we have deserved to be delivered up into the will of our enemies, that they that hate us even with a perfect hatred should rule over us. And if it shall please the Lord herein to deal with us according to our deservings, yet let this be our comfort, that in our bands for the defence and confirmation of the gospel, we are partakers with many of the saints of their grace, and that the life of Jesus is made manifest as by most plain tokens in our bodies, when we 'bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus,' 2 Cor. iv. 10. And in the mean time, let us give all diligence that the word of Christ may dwell in us plenteously, that the effectual power thereof may be manifested in us through our patient and constant suffering for Christ his sake and the gospel's, if the will of the Lord be such.

Now followeth the apostle's earnest protestation of his love towards the Philippians, which was the third thing which I noted in this second branch of the apostle's *exordium*, in these words, 'For God is my record,' &c., that so they might the rather both assure themselves that such was his persuasion of them, as hath been said, and likewise the more willingly hearken unto the things that he wrote unto them. In the words I note a vehement protestation, and the things whereof he maketh such protestation. His protestation is a calling of God to witness that he lieth not in this that he now speaketh, in these words, 'For God is my record.' The thing whereof he maketh such protestation is, of his hearty love of them, saying, 'God is my record, how I long after you all,' i.e. with what a longing desire to see you, I love you all from the very heart root, ἐν ταπείλῳ γεννήσαις, for so the word here used is very significantly translated, not after the flesh, but in Jesus Christ, of whom ye are loved, and from whom this my love proceedeth. Where, first, I note the apostle's vehement protestation, not of a vain and idle toy, but of his love towards the Philippians; not for any light or foolish matter, but for their great good, that they might hearken to the word of their salvation more gladly. Whence I observe, that a protestation, or an oath to witness a truth, when the glory of God or the good of our neighbour doth require it, may lawfully be made.

LECTURE VIII.

For God is my record, how I long after you all from the very heart-root in Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.—PHILIP. I. 8, 9.

NOW then, the first thing whieh here I note is, the apostle's vehement protestation, not concerning any trivial and ordinary matter, but touching his sincere and fervent love of the Philippians, nor to small or no purpose, but to win their attention unto the word of their salvation more gladly. For he protesteth and sweareth an oath, being nothing else but a calling of God to witness of that we speak, for their assurance to whom we swear, which whole definition is in this protestation; he protesteth, sayeth, and sweareth unto the Philippians, that he longeth after them all, and greatly loveth them all from the very heart-root in Jesus Christ, that so, being persuaded of his love, they might give the better heed unto the things he wrote. Whence I observe, that a protestation or an oath by God, when the glory of God or the good of our neighbour doth require it, may very lawfully be made. And this is proved, first, from the nature and definition of an oath. For what is an oath? It is, as even now we heard, an holy and religious calling of God to witness of the truth of that we speak, for their assurance unto whom we speak, as here the apostle, for the Philippians' assurance of his sincere love of them, calleth God to witness how he longeth after them all, how greatly he loveth them all from the very heart-root in Jesus Christ. And what herein is unbecoming a Christian, or which may not lawfully be done? Secondly, it is proved from the express commandment of God, for thus hath God commanded, saying, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name,' Deut. vi. 13. In which words, as to fear the Lord God, and to serve him, so to swear by his name is commanded. Thirdly, it is proved from the end of an oath, for the end of an oath is to decide debates, and to make an end of strifes; as the apostle sheweth, saying, Heb. vi. 16, that 'an oath for confirmation is, among men, an end of all strife.' And as Moses in a plain case sheweth, saying, Exod. xxii. 10, 11, 'If a man deliver to his neighbour to keep ass, or ox, or sheep, or any beast; and it die, or be hurt, or taken away by enemies, and no man see it: an oath of the Lord shall be between them twain, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's good; and the owner thereof shall take the oath, and he shall not make it good.' And this being the end of an oath, why may it not lawfully be made? Fourthly, it is proved from the practice of holy men of God; for Abraham, as we read, swore unto Abimelech by God, Gen. xxi. 23, that he would not hurt him, nor his children, nor his children's children. And Isaac and Abimelech afterwards sware one to another to the like

purpose, chap. xxvi. 31. And so Jacob and Laban sware one to another to the like purpose, chap. xxxi. 53. Likewise, our apostle oftentimes in his epistles protesteth and calleth God to witness of that he saith, Rom. i. 9, 2 Cor. i. 23, and xii. 19. And God himself, because he had no greater to swear by, sware by himself, as it is said in the prophet, Isa. xlv. 23, and as the apostle witnesseth, Heb. vi. 13. Lastly, it is proved from a necessary consequent; for if an oath be a part of God's worship, will it not then necessarily follow, that an oath may lawfully be made? Now that an oath is a part of God's worship, appeareth by many place of holy Scripture; as, where it is said in the prophet, Isa. xix. 18, 'In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and shall swear by the Lord of hosts,' that is, shall renounce their superstitions, and serve God as he hath appointed. And again, where it is said, Jer. iv. 2, 'Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' And therefore the Lord, by that prophet, in the next chapter, v. 7, complaineth of Judah and Jerusalem that they had forsaken him. And how did that appear? Because they swore by them that were no gods. 'Thy children,' saith he, 'have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods.' So that to swear by them that are no gods, is to forsake God. And why? Because it is to give his worship to another, even to them that are no gods. Which whoso doth, he forsaketh God.

Oh, but will the godly soul say, This needed not, in such a swearing age, to prove the lawfulness of swearing; and will the cursed swearer say, This is well indeed, that I have so good allowance for my swearing from the preacher. Hearken, therefore, yet a while, and know how we may protest and swear lawfully. First, therefore, if we will swear lawfully, we must swear by the name of God. For both the commandment and practice are so, as already we have heard, and the reason thereof is very plain; for who can witness that he that sweareth lieth not, but God only, that beholdeth the heart and knoweth what is in man? Or who is omnipotent, and able to maintain and defend him that speaketh truth, or to punish and take vengeance on him that sweareth a lie, but God only, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell? Secondly, if we will swear lawfully we must swear in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, Jer. iv. 2. In truth, for the confirmation of the truth, because we may not call God to witness a lie, lest he give us our portion with liars and swearers in the lake that ever burneth. In judgment, upon causes weighty,

certain, and necessary, when the glory of God or the good of our neighbour require it, because we may not call God lightly or rashly to witness upon trial or uncertainty,* or unnecessary causes, lest our judgment be as theirs that take his name in vain. In righteousness, for the confirmation of things godly, just, and lawful, because we may not call God to witness things ungodly, unjust, or unlawful, lest we be not holden guiltless for taking his name in vain; for thus much those three points imply. Thirdly, if we will swear lawfully, it must be when we have no other way of proof of our words, or confirmation of our promise; for if otherwise the thing for which we are to swear can be debated, decided, and ended, then by an oath we are not to swear, as by the end of an oath it doth appear, which is to 'end a strife,' so that where the strife may otherwise be ended, there an oath is not to be used. Swear, then, we may lawfully, but not otherwise than by the name of God, and that in truth, and in judgment, and in righteousness, and that when things cannot otherwise be cleared and ended than by an oath.

Which serveth first for the confutation of that error of the Anabaptists, who deny it to be lawful for a Christian to swear at all, the plain contrary whereof we have heard evidently proved out of the Scriptures. The places of Scripture whereon they ground their error are two, the one the saying of our blessed Saviour to Matthew, Mat. v. 34-37, the other the words of James in his epistle, James v. 12. The saying of our Saviour in Matthew is, 'Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God,' &c. The words of James are, 'before all things swear not, neither by heaven nor by earth, nor by any other oath,' &c.; from both which places they conclude that a Christian may not swear at all. For answer whereunto, we must understand, 1, that not all kinds of oaths are forbidden in these places; 2, what kind of oaths are there condemned. For the first, that not all kinds of oaths are forbidden in Matthew, appeareth by the very scope and drift of our Saviour in that place. For what was his scope and drift there? It appeareth by his exposition there of sundry laws, that his meaning was not to destroy the law, for so he saith, ver. 17, 'I come not to destroy the law and the prophets;' but his meaning was to purge the law from the corrupt glosses of the Pharisees, and to open the true meaning of it, as he doth, first, in the law touching murder, and then in the law touching adultery, and next in the law touching swearing. The law, then, not having simply forbidden swearing, neither doth our Saviour simply condemn swearing. Again, if all kinds of oaths be simply here forbidden, and only *yea* and *nay* commanded, what shall we say for our apostle, that contenteth not himself only with *yea* and *nay*? What shall we say for our Saviour himself, that, not therewith content, saith, 'Verily,

verily, I say unto you'? And again, oaths being a part of God's worship, as before we heard, if all kinds of oaths be here forbidden a Christian, then is a part of God's worship forbidden and condemned. Seeing, then, thus it may appear that not all kinds of oaths are here forbidden, let us now see what kinds of oaths are here forbidden and condemned; and this will appear by a short view of the corrupt glosses which the Pharisees added to the law touching swearing. The law was, 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform thine oaths to the Lord.' Their gloss was, that if any swear by the name of God, or by the things that were immediately belonging to the service of God, as by the gold of the temple, or the offering on the altar, vainly or perfidiously, not performing his oath, he offendeth; but if he swear by any other creature, as by heaven, or earth, or Jerusalem, or his head, or the temple, or the altar, or any that is not God, he offendeth not, nor is bound to perform his oath. Our Saviour his exposition of the law against their gloss is, that not only to swear in our common talk by the name of God, but also to swear by any other creature, is an offence against the law. So that here are not forbidden oaths made in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, but all oaths in common talk, either by God or by any creature whatsoever, or by anything that is not God. Yea, but it is said, 'Swear not at all.' True, in common talk swear not at all, not by the name of God, for that the law forbids, nor by any creature, although the Pharisees allow you, but 'let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.' Nay, I add, in great and weighty matters swear not at all, if any way you can avoid it, and when your *yea* and *nay* may be trusted; for whatsoever is more than *yea* and *nay* always 'cometh of evil,' even of the devil in thee, if thou swear of a wicked custom; and of evil in him to whom thou swearst, if, having no cause to distrust thy *yea* and *nay*, he do not trust thee, but cause thee to swear. The like answer is to be made to that of James, who useth the very words of our Saviour. Yea, but James addeth, 'Swear not by heaven, nor earth, nor by any other oath.' True, not vainly or perfidiously. So that no oath by God or any creature, in common talk, is lawful for any Christian; nor in weighty and necessary matters, if we can avoid it; but if we cannot avoid it, an oath by the name of God in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness is lawful, the Anabaptists' grounds, as ye see, proving nothing to the contrary.

The second use of our observation is, to restrain the wicked oaths of the profane swearers of our time. For, first, are we, when we swear, only to swear by the name of God, and not at all by any creature, or anything that is not God? How, then, darest thou, whosoever thou art, swear by the mass, by thy faith, by thy troth, by our lady, by St George, or the like? Are these thy gods, whom thou hast made to serve

* Qu. 'trivial or uncertain'?—ED.

them? or darest thou give the worship due unto God unto any but unto him? Did the Lord threaten ruin upon Israel, because they swore by their idols in Dan and Beersheba, saying, Amos viii. 14, 'They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth, and the manner of Beersheba liveth, even they shall fall, and never rise up again'? And darest thou swear by that idol of the mass, which was the sin of England, and is the sin of Rome? Did the Lord tell Judah that her children had forsaken the Lord, because they swore by them that were no gods, saying, Jer. v. 7, 'Thy children have forsaken me, and have sworn by them that are no gods'? And darest thou swear by our lady, by St George, by St John, or St Thomas, or the like, which are no gods? Doest thou not see that, thus swearing, thou forsakes God, and bringest ruin upon thyself? Did our blessed Saviour tell the scribes and Pharisees, saying, Mat. xxiii. 20-22, 'Whosoever sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it and by all things thereon; and whosoever sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it and him that dwelleth therein; and whosoever sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon'? And doest thou think that, when thou swearest by thy faith, thou swearest not by him in whom thou believest? or when thou swearest by thy troth, that thou swearest not by him in whom thou trustest? &c. In one word, thou that commonly swearest by anything that is not God, tell me what thinkest thou, doest thou therein swear by God, or no? If so, then thou takest his name in vain, and he will not hold thee guiltless. If no, then thou forsakes God, in that thou swearest by that which is no god. And look, then, what comes upon thy swearing by any creature or any thing that is not God.

Again, are we, when we swear, not to swear by any creature or any thing that is not God, but only by the name of God, and not thereby, but only in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, and when things otherwise cannot be cleared and ended? How, then, darest thou, O wretched man, in thine ordinary talk, upon every fond and light occasion, no necessity of God's glory or thy neighbour's good urging, swear by the holy name of God and of Jesus Christ? How doth not thy flesh and thy spirit tremble within thee? How doth it not pierce thy very heart and soul to swear by the life, by the body, by the sides, by the wounds, by the blood of Christ Jesus? Doest thou, cursed wretch, hope to live by his life that swearest by his life? hope to be benefited by his body, that swearest by his body? hope to be healed by his wounds, that swearest by his wounds? hope to be washed from thy sins by his blood, that swearest by his blood? Nay, thou that dost these things, dost crucify again unto thyself the son of God. Thou art one of them that spittest upon him, and buffetest him, that naillest him unto the cross, that thrustest thy spear into his side, that art accessory to the death of

that just one, and his blood shall surely be upon thee, unless he grant thee grace unto repentance. A pitiful case that a man can almost come into no place, into no company, but he shall hear such ordinary swearing by the name of God, that every third word almost shall be such an oath. A pitiful case that a man cannot pass the streets, but he shall hear little ones, that have little more than learned to speak, yet swear wickedly by the name of God. And yet so it is, as if our young ones had never learned to speak till they had learned to swear, and as if the elder sort had never spoken well till they had sworn lustily. A great many think themselves nobody unless they can swear it with the best, and that it is their credit to swear stoutly. But wretched credit with men that is got with the loss of God's favour, and better nobody than such a swearing body. Hear the word of the Lord by his prophet Zechariah, chap. v. 3, 4, 'This,' saith he, 'is the curse that goeth forth over the whole earth; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off, as well on this side as on that, and every one that sweareth,' &c. Enough, a man would think, to make the swearer's countenance change, and his knees to smite one against another.

Let this be enough, beloved, to warn you of this soul-sin of swearing, and to restrain you from it. Swear not at all in your common talk, either by God, for then he will not hold you guiltless; or by anything that is not God, for then ye forsake God; but 'let your communication be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay.' Let not your children, or your servants, or your scholars swear by anything that is not God, lest, instead of performing their promise in their baptism to forsake the devil, they forsake God. Neither let them swear by the name of God, lest by using it without reverence and fear, they provoke him to plague them. You must all of you know and remember that his name is glorious and fearful, that he is a jealous God and a consuming fire, and therefore ye may not think or speak of him but with reverence and humbleness, with fear and trembling. To conclude this point, 'He that useth much swearing,' saith the son of Sirach, Eccles. xxiii. 11, 'shall be filled with wickedness, and the plague shall never go from his house; and if he swear in vain, he shall not be innocent, but his house shall be full of plagues. Accustom not therefore thy mouth to swearing, nor take up for a custom the naming of the holy One; for as a servant which is often punished cannot be without some scar, so he that sweareth and nameth God continually, shall not be unpunished for such things.' Have your faith and your troth with God, but let your communication be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay, 'for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.' Pardon my dwelling on this point, being so needful to be spoken of, and having occasion but seldom to speak of it.

The second thing which here I note is, the thing whereof the apostle maketh such vehement protesta-

tion, which is, his sincere love of the Philippians. He protesteth, and taketh God to witness, that he longeth after them all, or greatly loveth them all from the very heart root in Jesus Christ. Whence I observe how the pastor ought to be affected towards his people, and generally one Christian towards another, and that is thus ; the pastor ought to love his people, and one Christian ought to love another, even with sincere love. ‘Owe nothing,’ saith the apostle, Rom. xiii. 8, ‘to any man, but to love one another,’ which rule is general for all Christians, and containing in it two good instructions : the one, to fly debt, that we should not owe anything one to another ; the other, to follow after love, that we should love one another. And, writing unto Timothy more particularly, he noteth the pastor’s love of his people, where he saith, 1 Tim. iv. 12, ‘Be an ensample unto them that believe, in word, in conversation, in love ;’ in love, I say, that as they see your love to be towards them, so their love may be one towards another, even as the apostle prayeth for the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. iii. 12, saying, ‘The Lord increase you, and make you to abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you,’ wherein his love towards them is signified, the love which should be in the pastor towards his flock, that as his is towards them, so theirs might be one towards another.

But since there are so many slights in love, how can Christians shew that they love one another, and pastors that they love their people, even with sincere love ? that is, our love must be a great love, so great that if we be absent from them whom we love, we long after them with a longing desire to see them ; that, if we be their pastors, we may bestow some spiritual comfort among them, and otherwise, that we may perform some duties of love unto them. Such was our apostle’s love to the Romans, as he witnesseth, Rom. i. 11, where he saith, that he ‘longed to see them, that he might bestow upon them some spiritual gift to strengthen them.’ Such, also, was Epaphroditus’ love towards these Philippians, as our apostle witnesseth in the next chapter, ver. 26 ; and such was his own towards them, as this place sheweth. And such, after their example, must be the love of all pastors towards their people, and of all Christians one towards another, if their love be sincere. Yea, but such and so great may be their love one towards another, as that they greatly long and desire to see one another, and yet their love be not hearty, but full of dissimulation. True ; and therefore a second quality is requisite in sincere love, namely, that it be ‘without dissimulation,’ even ‘from the very heart-root.’ Such love our apostle requireth in all Christians one towards another, saying, Rom. xii. 9, ‘Let love be without dissimulation ;’ and so the apostle Peter, saying, 1 Peter i. 22, ‘Love one another with a pure heart fervently.’ Such was our apostle’s love towards the Philippians, loving and longing after them ‘from the very heart-root ;

and such must be the love of all pastors towards their people, and of all Christians one towards another, if their love be sincere. Yea, but yet such and so great may be their love one towards another, as that they long one after another, even from the very heart-root, and yet their love be not sincere, but after the flesh, as the manner of many carnal men and worldlings is to love ; as we see that Shechem’s heart clave unto Dinah, Gen. xxxiii. 3. True ; and therefore yet a third quality is requisite in sincere love, namely, that it be ‘in the Lord,’ even in Christ Jesus, a spiritual, holy, and sanctified love in Christ, and for him. Such was our apostle’s love towards the Thessalonians, as himself witnesseth, saying, 1 Thes. ii. 7, 8, ‘We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. Thus being affectioned towards you, our goodwill was to have dealt unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.’ And a little after he saith, ver 11, ‘We exhorted you, and comforted and besought every one of you, as a father his children.’ And such, he taketh God to witness, his love was towards the Philippians. And still the precepts run, to love one another in the Lord ; and such must be the love of pastors towards their people, and of Christians one towards another, if their love be sincere ; they must long after them in their absence from them, and that from the very heart-root, and that in Jesus Christ.

If pastors should examine their love towards their people, and Christians their love one towards another, by this rule, how much sincere love, think ye, would there be found, either in Christians generally, or in pastors particularly ? For such is men’s love generally, that they do not greatly long after one another to see them, if they be absent from them, at least not from the very heart-root, or surely not in Christ Jesus. Nay, be we absent from them, or they from us, we care not whether we see them again or no, but to long after them, or to love them from the very heart-root, that we think needs not ; or if we do, it is in some carnal or worldly respect, not for Christ Jesus his sake, or in Christ Jesus. Nay, commonly we can satisfy ourselves well enough with our love of one another, as Christian enough, sincere enough, and holy enough, though in our love there be never a one of these qualities, though neither we long after them from the very heart-root in Christ Jesus, nor long after them from the very heart-root, nor long after them at all. And as it is with men generally, so is it with the pastors particularly. Too many that can be long absent from their flocks, and yet not long after them to see them, to bestow some spiritual gift upon them ; too many that love not their flocks from the very heart-roots ; too many that love their flocks only for their fleece, but not in Christ Jesus ; but very few, like unto Aaron, bear the names of their people before the Lord upon their two shoulders for a remembrance, Exod. xxviii. 12 ; very few that bear, as Aaron, the names of their

people in a breastplate upon their heart, ver. 29, that is, very few that have their people in their hearts, to deal unto them not the gospel only, but also their own souls, because they are dear unto them; whereas it should be so with all pastors. Well, ye see what love

should be, both in a pastor towards his people, and generally in all Christians one towards another. Think on these things, and blessed shall ye be if ye think on them, and do them.

LECTURE IX.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may discern things that differ, &c.—PHILIP. I. 9.

NOW, after the signification of the apostle's thanks-giving unto God on the Philippians' behalf, for their fellowship in the gospel, and of his persuasion of their perseverance therein unto the end, followeth, for a full complement of testifying his love unto them, and winning their attention unto him, a signification of his praying unto God for them in these words, 'And this,' &c. Before, he had said, ver. 4, that always in all his prayers he had them in remembrance; and now he sheweth what his prayer for them was, and that was, 'That their love might abound,' &c. Which prayer, as it doth abundantly testify his love towards the Philippians, so doth it also imply a commendation of them, and an exhortation unto them; for, in praying that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, he giveth them testimony of their love, and of their knowledge and judgment, and that they did abound in these things, and his prayer is, that they may abound yet more and more in these things. And again, in thus praying for them, he lets them, in his own example, see what they are to pray for, and in effect, exhorteth them to give all diligence hereunto, that 'their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge,' &c. And, indeed, this is the very main proposition and principal exhortation of this epistle, that their love may abound, &c. But let us a little more particularly sift the meaning of the words in this his prayer. His prayer, ye see, is that their love may abound, i.e. that as a fountain which keepeth not his waters in itself, but sends them out unto others, so their love may not be shut within their own bowels, but issue out unto the good of others. And he prayeth that their love may abound yet more and more, whereby he implieth that their love was manifest, and that their love abounded; for the streams thereof had flowed unto him, being in prison at Rome, and he prayeth that it may 'abound yet more and more.' But how? 'In knowledge and in all judgment,' that their love being founded and grounded in sound knowledge and in sound judgment, 'they may discern things that differ,' &c. Now, by *knowledge* he meaneth the general knowledge of God's will out of his word; and by *judgment* he meaneth such an experience and sense in themselves of spiritual things, as through which men, expert in the word of righteousness, have their

wits or spiritual senses exercised to discern both good and evil, as by comparing this place with that to the Hebrews it may appear, Heb. v. 14; for that which the apostle there hath, 'Strong meat belongeth to them that are of age, which through custom have their wits exercised to discern both good and evil,' is as if we should read, after the phrase of our apostle here, thus, 'Strong meat belongeth to them that are of age, which through judgment can discern both good and evil.' So that the apostle prayeth that they may abound, as in love, so in knowledge of God's will out of his word, and in all judgment, i.e. in sound judgment, through a feeling experience in themselves of such spiritual things as they know by the word, whereon their love may be grounded. And why doth he pray for their growth and increase in these things? Even for these ends: 1, that they may discern things that differ one from another, good from bad, and uncorrupt from corrupt doctrine; 2, that they may be pure from stain or corruption in doctrine, faith, or manners; 3, that they may be without offence, neither slipping back nor standing at a stay, but holding on a constant course until the day of Christ; 4, that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, abounding in every good work, which are by Jesus Christ, from whom they have their beginning, unto the glory and praise of God, which is their end. These were the ends for which he prayed, that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in, &c.

So that the things principally to be noted in these words are three. *First*, the apostle's action of praying—This I pray. *Secondly*, the things for which he prayed, which were three: 1, their increase in love; 2, their increase in knowledge; 3, their increase in judgment. *Thirdly*, the ends wherefore he prayed for these things unto them, which were four, as even now we heard. Now, let us see what notes we may gather hence, for our further use and instruction.

The first thing which here I note is, that the apostle prayed for the Philippians, 'that their love might abound yet more and more,' &c. The Philippians abounded in love, in knowledge, and in judgment, yet still the apostle prayed that they might abound yet more and more in these things. Whence, 1, I observe the continual use and necessity of prayer; Whatsoever graces the Lord hath bestowed on us, yet

still we have need to pray, even that we may yet more and more abound in those very graces ; and therefore the apostle's exhortation is, 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray continually,' whether ye be in adversity or in prosperity, whether ye want or ye have, yet pray continually. If ye want, that he may supply your wants, and give unto you, 'which giveth unto all men liberally, and reproacheth no man ;' for so James exhorteth, James i. 5, saying, 'If any man lack wisdom'—which is there meant of wisdom to endure patiently afflictions, but it is true in all graces generally, if any man lack any grace—'let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and reproacheth no man, and it shall be given him.' So, likewise, if ye have, yet pray continually that ye may increase and abound ; and if ye abound, yet pray continually, that you may abound yet more and more in those graces wherein ye abound. So we see the apostle prayed for the Thessalonians, saying, 1 Thes. iii. 12, 'The Lord increase you, and make you abound in love one towards another, and towards all men.' In the first chapter he had commended their diligent love ; so that it was not for the having of that which they lacked that the apostle prayed, but for their increasing and abounding in that grace which they had. And so here our apostle prayed for the Philippians, that they might abound yet more and more,' &c. What ! was it for the having of that which they lacked that he prayed ? No. Was it that they might abound in that which they had ? Nor only so, but that they might more and more abound in those graces wherein already they abounded. And the apostle thus praying for the Thessalonians, that they might increase and abound in that grace which already they had, and for the Philippians, that they might increase and abound more and more in those graces wherein already they abounded, therein taught them, and in them us, that we are to make our requests unto God in prayer and supplication, as for the having of such graces as we want, so that we may increase and abound in those graces which we have, and that we may abound still more and more in those graces wherein already we do abound. So that whatsoever graces we have, still we are to pray that we may continually more and more abound therein. And the reason why we are continually so to pray is very plain ; for, 1, such is our weakness, through the sin that hangeth so fast on us, that unto whatsoever measure of grace we be grown, yet stand therein we cannot, unless he do continually stay us and uphold us with his hand. Let Peter witness, whose faith faileth, and he sinketh if the Lord sustain him not and save him, Mat. xiv. 31. Paul also may witness the same, whose courage in his bands may fail him, if, by the power of the Spirit through the prayer of the saints, he be not assisted, that therein he may speak boldly as he ought, Eph. vi. 20. In regard, therefore, of our unability to stand or grow without his continual

support and supply, still we had need to pray unto the Lord, whatsoever measure of grace we be grown unto. 2. In whatsoever grace we abound, yet therein we come so far short of that perfection wherein we should endeavour, that continually we had need to pray that we may abound yet more and more therein. And therefore David, that was well taught in the Lord his statutes, yet still, Ps. cxix., prayed unto the Lord to teach him his statutes ; and having more understanding than all his teachers, yet still prayed unto the Lord to give him understanding ; and taking as great delight in the way of his testimonies, as in all manner of riches, yet still prayeth unto the Lord that he will incline his heart unto his testimonies. And what was this, but his prayer that he might abound yet more in the knowledge, and in the understanding, and in the delight of the law of the Lord ; because, howsoever he abounded therein, yet he came far short of that he should ? And for the same reason it behoveth us so to do, as we have him for an ensample.

This, then, may serve to condemn our great negligence and slackness, our great coldness and faintness generally, both in public and private prayer unto the Lord our God. For is there so continual use and necessity of prayer, whether we want any grace, that we may have it, or have any grace, that we may increase and abound in it, or abound in any grace, that we may abound yet more and more in it ? How then is it that we are so negligent and slack, so cold and faint in prayer generally ? Unto public prayer, wherein we pray for what we want, and for increase in that we have, and that we may more and more abound in that wherein we abound, how negligent and slack are we, and how cold and faint are we therein ! Some of us come so seldom thereunto, as that there is very little difference between us and plain recusants ; others of us come so slowly thereunto, as that we come, as they say it is good to come to a fray, to the end of it ; others of us, in time of public prayer, are occupied either in private prayers, or in reading upon some book or other, or in talking one unto another ; others of us either fall asleep, or are troubled with wandering and by-thoughts, and have our minds at home or in the fields, upon our commodities or upon our pleasures, and rather upon everything than upon that we should. Generally so defective and wanting unto our duties we are herein, as if either we knew not, or cared not, how to carry ourselves in public prayer. And as we fail of that we ought in public, so do we also in private prayer. For how seldom do we, as our blessed Saviour willeth us, Mat. vi. 6, 'enter into our chambers, and shut our doors upon us, and pray unto our Father which is in secret' ? Can our wants press us to pray privately unto the Lord that he will supply our wants ? Nay, seldom we humble ourselves in private before the Lord, even for the supply of our wants ; or if we do, our prayers are so cold, and so faint, and so troubled with wan-

dering and by-thoughts, that we pray and have not, because we pray not as we ought. Can the graces which we have, and wherein we abound, press us to pray privately unto the Lord that we may increase in those graces we have, and abound yet more and more in those wherein we abound? Nay, here commonly we forget ourselves, and, as if we were well and needed no more, we pray not unto the Lord for increase, but carrying ourselves like unto the Pharisee, we think we are not as other men, and we say, Depart from me, for I am more holy, more learned, more wise, more sober, more modest, more patient than thou; and forget God, by whom we are so. Surely not the best of us all, but we are guilty of very many defects touching prayer. Let us, therefore, hereafter use more carefulness herein than heretofore we have done. Let us reform our negligence and slackness in coming to public prayer. It hath the promise (Mat. xviii. 20), that 'where two or three be gathered together in God's name, there will he be in the midst of them;' and oftentimes he blesseth us because of them that pray with us. Let us pray in faith and waver not, and 'whatsoever we ask in prayer, if we believe, we shall surely receive it.' Let us not cease, but, in public and in private, pour out our prayers unto the Lord, both for such graces as we want, and for increase in such as we have, and that we may abound more and more in every good grace. Continual need we have: let us therefore, as the apostle exhorteth, 'Pray continually;' even whatsoever graces we have, let us pray that we may abound more and more therein.

The second thing which henee I observe is, that Christians are not to stand at a stay, or to content themselves with reasonable good beginnings; but whatsoever grace it is wherein they stand, they are continually to labour that they may abound more and more therein. Which, as this place sheweth, so farther that of the apostle to the Hebrews, where he saith, Heb. vi. 1, 'Therefore, leaving the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, let us be led forward unto perfection,' where the apostle shews that we are not always to be a-learning the principles and beginnings of religion, but as children, which at the first are fed with milk, do afterwards take and digest strong meat, so from principles in religion, we should go forward unto perfection in religion, growing up daily more and more in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man. Add hereunto the example of our apostle, Philip. iii. 12, he having attained unto a great measure of perfection, yet counted not himself that he had attained unto it, but he followed hard after it that he might comprehend it, and still endeavoured himself unto that which was before; in whose example, as in a glass, we may see that we are not to rest in any perfection that we can grow unto in this life, but still we are to go forward from perfection to perfection, and still to labour to increase and abound more and

more in every grace wherewith we are blessed. And how should any man think otherwise, considering what enemies we have which hinder our perfection? For can we have the devil ever seeking, like a roaring lion, to devour us, the world laying a thousand baits to deceive us, our own flesh, as a strong armed man, evermore assaulting us, so that our whole lives be a continual sharp warfare unto us, and yet hope for such perfection in this life, that we need not strive farther? Nay, these continually bid us such battle, that if either we stand or give back, we may quickly take the foil. Still, therefore, we must hold on; and as long as the Lord continues our life, so long we must give all diligence to abound more and more in every grace wherein we stand.

This then serveth to condemn the miserable corruptions of our times; for so it is with us, that a great many of us rather go backward, and grow worse and worse, than better and better. Many which seemed to have begun in the spirit, make an end in the flesh; which seemed for a time to have run well with the Galatians, are with them drawn away with divers lusts, which drown them in perdition. Others of us pause at the matter, and, as if there were danger in every step farther, we stand at a stay, and move not our foot forward. But what do I say? that we stand at a stay? Nay, indeed and in truth, we plainly go backward; for not to go forward in the way of Christianity, is to go backward, and not to increase in the graces of God's Spirit, is to decrease in them; and therefore the judgment of the Laodiceans, because they were not hot, was as if they had been cold, even to be spewed out of the Lord his mouth, Rev. iii. 16. Others of us can be content to make a show of going forward, and increasing in religion and piety, but it is for our advantage and gain, that, under a colour of zeal and forwardness, we may the better compass our commodities and bring our purpose to pass; for we like better of the account that gain should be godliness, than that godliness should be gain, and a gain we will make of a shew of godliness. The least number by far, is of them that having begun well, do in their souls labour after perfection, that they may abound more and more in the grace wherein they stand. But let our care, beloved, be to be of this number. Let us so strive after perfection, that we may daily grow from perfection to perfection, till we become perfect men in Christ Jesus. Let us continually pray with the apostles, 'Lord, increase our faith,' and let us labour, by all holy means of hearing the word preached, and reverent use of the blessed sacrament, to grow more and more in faith. Let us pray with the prophet, 'Stablish the thing, O God, that thou hast wrought in us,' Ps. lxviii. 28; and let us labour to be daily more and more grounded and stablished in every grace that the Lord hath wrought in us. And if already we do thus, let us comfort ourselves in this, that we do as we ought, and let us hold on our good course unto the end.

The third thing which here I note is, that the apostle prayeth that their ‘love might abound more and more,’ their love towards God, their love one towards another, their love towards the poor saints and afflicted members of Christ Jesus. Whence I observe, that in all Christians this must be a continual care, that they may abound always more and more in love towards God, in love one towards another, and in love towards the poor saints and afflicted members of Christ Jesus. For, first, touching the love of God, how can we love him enough who so loved us, even when we were enemies unto him, that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world to suffer death for us, that we might live through him? This was love passing the love of women, and how should we love him that thus loved us first? Sure our care can never be enough, that still we may more and more abound in love towards him. Again, touching the love one of another, we see how the apostle prayeth for the Thessalonians, saying, 1 Thes. iii. 12, ‘The Lord increase you, and make you to abound in love one towards another, and towards all men.’ Which his prayer for them was a plain signification of that care which was behoveful to be in them, namely, that they might increase and abound daily more and more in mutual love one towards another; and not in them only, but in us also, unto whose edification and instruction those things were plainly written. Also, touching our love towards the poor saints and afflicted members of Christ Jesus, we see how the apostle presseth and urgeth the Corinthians, 2 Cor. viii., and in them us, therunto, commanding their good beginning, and exhorting them, by the example of the Macedonians and of our blessed Saviour, to continue, and to abound more and more therein. But what should farther proof of this point need than this, that love and charity towards the poor saints is so often commanded and commended in the holy Scriptures, and so greatly rewarded? for the oftener that it is commanded and commended in the holy Scriptures, and the more that it is rewarded, the more careful it behoveth us to be, that we abound therein. Deut. xv. 7, 11, ‘Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand unto thy brother, to thy needy and to thy poor in the land, saith the Lord. Thou shalt not harden thine heart, but open thy bowels of compassion, and be merciful, and loving, and tender-hearted towards thy poor brother.’ The like commandment is often given in the holy Scripture. And what a commendation was it generally unto the churches of Macedonia, that out of their most extreme poverty, they were so richly liberal unto the poor afflicted saints, and particularly unto these Philippians, that they communicated to our apostle in his bands! Or what greater reward can be given unto any, than is promised unto them that give the saints meat when they are hungry, that give them drink when they are thirsty, that clothe them when they are naked, that

visit them when they are sick, that relieve them when they are in prison, &c., even a kingdom of glory? In a point so clear, many proofs are not needful. For more care is not needful that we may increase and abound more and more in faith, hope, or other grace of the Spirit, than that we may abound more and more in love, even in love both towards God and towards one another, and towards the poor saints in their affliction and misery.

Which serveth to condemn the more than key-cold love of Christians in our days. To censure any of you so sharply, beloved, as if ye loved not God, or at least but with a cold love, would seem, it may be, hard. For all of you love God, and he that thinketh otherwise is much deceived. But tell me, do all of you love one another? It may be that some of you will here yield a little. And I tell you, or rather the Holy Ghost telleth you, that ‘he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, loveth not God, whom he hath not seen,’ 1 John iv. 20. The apostle’s exhortation is, Rom. xii. 10, ‘Be affectioned to love one another with brotherly love;’ and again, Heb. xiii. 1, ‘Let brotherly love continue;’ and again, 1 Pet. iv. 8, ‘Above all things have fervent love amongst you.’ But our often brawlings, and divisions, and quarrels, and contentions, and swellings, and discords, shew that we have not hearkened nor obeyed their counsel, so far have we been from abounding more and more in love one towards another. And if we do not love one another as we should, judge ye, by the former place, whether we love God as we should. ‘Behold,’ saith the prophet, Ps. cxxxiii. 1, ‘how good and joyful a thing it is brethren to dwell together in unity.’ Surely, in anything we cannot be liker unto God, than if we love one another; for God is love, and we by love are made God’s house, wherein he liketh to dwell: ‘For he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,’ 1 John iv. 16. We have been too cold in love one towards another, and therefore too cold in love towards our God. Above all things, let us have fervent love amongst ourselves, and so shall we be sure that we love God indeed.

And as we have been too cold in love one towards another, and consequently in love towards God, so can I not much commend our love towards the poor saints and afflicted members of Christ Jesus. I cannot reprove you for not abounding *more and more* in this love, because, as yet, you do not abound in this love. Through a good and godly statute lately made, the poor saints come not now unto your doors; but through want of relief they faint in their houses; insomuch, that as the children of Israel, when their burden was heavier, and their task greater, cried out upon Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘The Lord look upon you and judge, for ye have made our savour to stink before Pharaoh and his servants, in that ye have put a sword in their hand to slay us.’ So they cry out upon them that were the means of this statute, saying, ‘The

Lord look upon them that have done thus unto us, for they have made our savour to stink before our brethren, and have put a sword in their hands to slay us. And where is the cause of this cry? Not in the statute, for it is as good a statute as could be devised, both for you and them; but the cause is in you. Ye are well content that they come not to your doors as they were wont; but there wanteth in you a willing and ready mind to contribute to their necessities, as the statute requireth. When some task or burden should be levied upon you for their maintenance, in respect of that relief which they were wont to find at your doors, here ye draw back the shoulder, and every man would give so little, that the statute cannot have its intendment. And thus it is that you have a sword to kill the poor withal; for, by the statute, they may not come to your doors, and yet you will not contribute to their maintenance according unto the statute. Beloved, open the bowels of your

compassion, let your love towards the poor saints appear, communicate to their affliction, misery, and poverty; and as God hath given to every man, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity, but willingly and cheerfully. They are God's saints, they are members of Christ's body, they are your brethren, and many of them, it may be, as rich in God's favour as the most of you, and that which ye willingly and cheerfully now give unto them shall further your reckoning in the day of Christ Jesus. Be therefore ready to give and glad to distribute, laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come. Let your love towards God, towards one another, towards the poor saints of Christ Jesus, be manifest unto all men, that they which see your love may glorify God on your behalf. So shall ye be loved of Love itself, and live for ever where your love shall have none end.

LECTURE X.

In knowledge and in all judgment.—PHILIP. I. 9.

THE next thing which here I note is, that the apostle prayeth that the Philippians may abound more and more 'in knowledge,' namely, in knowledge of God's will out of his word. Whence I observe another continual care necessary for all Christians, and that is, that they may abound more and more in the knowledge of God's will out of his holy word. 'My brethren,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 20, 'be not children in understanding, but as concerning malice be children, but in understanding be of a ripe age.' The apostle had before signified his own mind of praying and speaking in strange tongues without understanding, and in a known tongue with understanding, therein taxing their too great admiring of strange tongues, and too little regard of knowledge and understanding. Now, in effect he tells them, that therein they are like unto little children, which, if they see fair, and great, and coloured letters in a book, are in great love with the letters, but care not for the sense and understanding of the words. But he exhorteth them, 'be not children in understanding,' as if he should have said, Children indeed care not for understanding, but it may not be so with you; ye were children sometimes, and cared not for understanding, and ye were children sometimes, and but young in understanding and knowledge, but ye may not be so still, but ye must grow to be of a ripe age in understanding; ye must increase in knowledge as in years ye do increase. And lest they should say that Christ would have them to be 'like unto little children,' Mat. xviii. 3, he preventeth that, and tells them that he would have them to be like unto little children 'concerning malice,' but

concerning knowledge and understanding he would have them to be no children, but of a ripe age. So that hence we see that our care is to be that we be not children, but men of a ripe age touching understanding, *i. e.* that we may increase and grow forward more and more in knowledge, even from knowledge to knowledge. To the like purpose is that of the apostle, where he saith, Heb. vi. 1, 'Leaving the doctrine of the beginnings of Christ, let us be led forward unto perfection.' He had, in the end of the former chapter, somewhat sharply told the Hebrews, that 'when as concerning the time they ought to be teachers, yet they had need to be taught the very principles of the word of God.' Now, therefore, he doth exhort them that they would not be still a-learning the principles and beginnings of religion, but that they would go forward from perfection to perfection, and abound more and more in knowledge. We may not then be as idle loiterers, which spend their time and profit not; but as our time spent in the school of Christ doth require of us, so must our profiting be in the knowledge of his will out of his word. Yea, look into our own practice, and we shall find our own judgment to be such. If we have children, and set them to their books, we look that according to their time spent thereat their profiting should be, and that they should increase in knowledge and learning, as they grow in years and in time spent at their book; and if they do not so profit, we take them from the school and set them to some other thing. So that by our own judgment, so many of us as are taught in the school of Christ, we should increase in the knowledge of Christ, and as we spend more and more time in the school of

Christ, so should we abound more and more in the knowledge of Christ, and if we do not so, by our own judgments we are to be excluded as non-proficients out of the school of Christ. And what then becomes of us? Nothing then to set us unto, but as it was said to the unprofitable servant, Mat. xxv. 30, ‘Cast that unprofitable servant into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,’ so shall it be said to such non-proficients, Cast that non-proficient scholar into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This, then, first, may teach us to beware of that leaven of theirs that would have us nusled up in ignorance, and bear the world in hand that ‘ignorance is the mother of devotion.’ For such a brood of Satan there is, as will tell you that the Scriptures are dark and hard to be understood, and perilous to be read; that will highly commend your modesty, if ye presume not to read the Scriptures; that will tell you it is enough for you to believe as the church believeth, though ye know not how to give account of your faith; that will allow well of learning nothing, and after many years to be never the wiser; in a word, that will the sooner suspect you of heresy, the mere knowledge ye have in the Scriptures. Such are they that would have praying, singing, reading, and all other rites of the church done in a strange language; that would have us barred from the reading of the Scriptures in a known tongue; that would have none but great clerks and divines seen in the Scriptures. But what saith the Holy Ghost? ‘Search the Scriptures,’ saith our blessed Saviour, John v. 39, ‘for in them ye think to have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.’ ‘Grow,’ saith Peter unto the church, ‘in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,’ 2 Peter iii. 18. And our apostle, Col. iii. 16, ‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously in all wisdom;’ and in this place his prayer is for the church of Philippi, that they may ‘abound more and more in knowledge.’ Now, what can be more contrary and repugnant unto other, than this doctrine of the Holy Ghost unto that doctrine of theirs? Our blessed Saviour sets us unto the Scriptures to search them; and they would not have us to presume to read the Scriptures. The apostle Peter would have us to ‘grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;’ and they would not have us look into the Scriptures, lest we fall into heresies. Our apostle would have ‘the word of Christ to dwell in us plenteously;’ and they would have us only to believe as the church believeth, and care not though we know not how to give account of our faith. Our apostle would have us to ‘abound more and more in knowledge;’ and they tell us that ignorance is the mother of devotion. See, then, whether there be not cause to beware of them, and to bid fie upon the beast that speaketh so presumptuously against the word of God. As the apostle saith unto the Galatians,

touching the false apostles, Gal. vi. 13, ‘They desire to have you circumcised, that they might rejoice in your flesh;’ so I say unto you, touching these false apostles, they desire to have you close shut up in ignorance, that they may lead you blindfold at their pleasures into all their devilish errors, and that they may rejoice in their advantage by your ignorance. Beware, therefore, of them, and hearken not unto them, lest if ye err in your hearts, because ye know not his ways through your ignorance in the Scriptures, he swear, as sometimes he did unto the Israelites in his wrath, that ye shall never enter into his rest, even to the heavenly Canaan, whereof that earthly Cauaan was a type.

2. This may teach us to give all diligence unto the reading, and hearing, and meditating of the holy Scriptures, that so we may abound more and more in all knowledge and understanding. Very lamentable it is, beloved, to see and consider how many hundreds, nay thousands, in this clear light of the gospel, when the Scriptures are or may be read and known of us all, yet are as ignorant in the Scriptures and of the things that belong to their salvation, as when they sat in the darkness of Egypt, when they could see no light of the Scriptures, by reason of the strange language. We have had many Ezras that have ‘read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and given the sense’ thereof, that the rest might understand; many ministers of Christ Jesus, that have read the law and the gospel unto us every Sabbath day in our churches; many preachers of the gospel that have plainly opened the Scriptures unto us, whereby we might be made wise unto salvation, even forty years long. And have not the Scriptures been read unto the greatest number of us in vain? Notwithstanding so much preaching and teaching of the holy word of life, are we not still ignorant, and have still need to be taught the very beginnings of Christ, the very principles of religion? Have we not many masters of Israel that think themselves great men, like unto Nicodemus, that know not those things, which the very babes in Christ’s school ought to know? Have we not many leaders of the people and masters of families, unto whose shame it may be spoken, that they have not the knowledge of God? Have we not many that, if they be asked, are not able to give an account of their faith, nor know truth from error, religion from superstition? The thing is too true, and too lamentable. Beloved, hath not the Lord our God said unto us all, Dent. vi. 6, ‘These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt rehearse them continually unto thy children, and shalt talk of them,’ &c.; and shall we not hearken to his voice, to do according to all he hath commanded us? Hath not our blessed Saviour told us, that ‘this is eternal life, to know God to be the only very God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ,’ John xvii. 3; and shall not we labour to grow in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus

Christ? Hath not the holy prophet said, Ps. i. 2, that 'blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord; and which meditateth therein day and night'? and shall we not give all diligence to the reading, and hearing, and meditating of the holy Scriptures? Nay, let me, I beseech you, exhort you, as that godly father* did his people, Provide you Bibles which are the medicine of your souls; if you will nothing else, at least get the New Testament. In the Bible, there ye have the whole will of your heavenly Father, there ye shall see what legacies he hath bequeathed unto you, and what duties he requireth of you. If the father of our bodies had bequeathed us a great legacy by his will, it would not be much needful to wish us get our Father's will, and to look diligently into it, to see, if not what he requireth of us, yet what he bequeatheth to us; neither would we stick at the cost for the search of it, if we knew where to have it. And shall the Father of our souls leave us his will, and by his will bequeath us everlasting life, and shall we not labour to get his will? Shall a matter of ten shillings stay us from the having of his will? Shall we not search it, and look diligently into it? Let us, beloved, get the book of God's law into our hand, 'and let it not depart out of our mouths; but let us meditate therein day and night, that we may observe and do according to all that is written therein,' as the Lord exhorted Joshua, Josh. i. 8. Let us, likewise, flock as doves unto the windows, unto the places where the word is preached; and when we have heard, let us meditate and confer of that we have heard. If the children of our bodies had gone to the school, and in the space of seven years had profited nothing, what would we say unto them, or think of them? Hardly enough, no doubt. And what shall we then think of ourselves, that in the space of forty years, are scarce yet past our A, B, C, and have not yet attained unto any reasonable knowledge? Let us hereafter recompense our former negligence with greater diligence, and let us slack no holy means, whereby we may grow into all holy knowledge. Let us labour to be rich in all knowledge, and leaving the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, let us be led forward unto perfection. Let us henceforth be no more children, wavering and carried about with every wind of doctrine; but let us grow up unto a perfect man, and unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ, that we may be 'able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth all knowledge, that we may be filled with all fulness of God.' By reading, by hearing, by meditating, by praying, let your care be to 'abound more and more in knowledge.'

The next thing which here I note is, that the apostle prayeth for the Philippians that they may 'abound more and more in all judgment'; in all judgment, that is, in sound judgment, that having their wits exercised

* Chrysostom.

through long custom, they may discern both good and evil. So that, as he would have them to abound more and more in knowledge, so farther, he would have them also to abound more and more in a sound and feeling experience of spiritual things in themselves, that they might spiritually feel in their hearts and souls that which they knew out of the word. Whence I observe a further continual care necessary for all Christians, and that is, that they may abound daily more and more, not in knowledge only of God's will out of his word, but in sound judgment also, through a feeling experience in themselves of such spiritual things as they know out of the word, that what they know out of the word they may feel the truth of it by experience in themselves. This care our apostle sheweth that he had, where he saith that the thing which he esteemed was, to 'know Christ and the virtue of his resurrection,' Philip. iii. 10. He knew the doctrine of Christ his resurrection, and he knew this to be the virtue of Christ his resurrection, that by it the saints of God rise from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. But his desire farther was, that he might feel in himself, and know by his own experience, the virtue of Christ his resurrection, by the death of sin and the life of righteousness in himself, that as he knew by the word Christ his resurrection to have such a virtue, so by experience in himself he might know Christ his resurrection to have such a virtue. And this care the prophet exhorteth all men unto, where he saith, Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'Taste and see how gracious the Lord is.' Where ye may not think that the prophet speaketh, as if the gracious goodness of the Lord could be tasted on with the mouth, or seen with the eye; but his meaning is, that such is the gracious goodness of the Lord unto his children, that they may have as sound experimental knowledge thereof, as if they should taste it with their mouths or see it with their eyes. It is, then, as if the prophet had thus said, Know ye do the gracious goodness of the Lord, by his manifold mercies; and more, then, so ye may know it by your own experience. Acknowledge, therefore, him to be gracious, whom by your own experimental knowledge ye do, as it were, taste and see to be gracious. As, then, the prophet doth exhort us, and as our apostle, both by example and exhortation, moveth us, our care should be that, besides our knowledge out of the word, we might have a feeling knowledge of that we know out of the word, by experience in ourselves.

This, then, should teach us to observe the mercies and judgments of the Lord, to observe the proof and experience in our daily life, of such things as we know by the word, that so we may have not a contemplative only, but an experimental knowledge of things in ourselves. As, for example, the Scripture telleth us, that 'the poor crieth and the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of all his troubles,' Ps. xxxiv. 6. This we know to be true, because we find it so in the word. But our care should be farther to know it by a feeling

experience in our own selves. We must then observe the mercies of the Lord in hearing us when we call upon him, and delivering us in every needful time of trouble ; and so shall we know, not only by the word, but by experience in our own selves, that the Lord heareth the poor when they cry unto him, and saveth them out of all their troubles,' ver. 7. So David, besides this knowledge out of the word, that 'The angel of the Lord pitcheth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,' had observed the truth of it by his own experience in his deliverance out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, 1 Sam. xvii. 37 ; and thereupon was bold to encounter that great Goliath, that uncircumcised Philistine. Again, we know that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ his church, because the Scripture saith so, Mat. xvi. 18. But will we so know it to be so, as if our own senses should tell us that it were so ? Then we must observe the storms and tempests, the persecutions and troubles, the batteries and assaults, that Satan, in his members, makes against the church, and how the Lord bringeth all their counsels to nought, and maketh their devices to be nothing else but the imagination of a vain thing. And thus in all things we must observe, that by long experience our spiritual senses may be exercised to know the truth of everything that we know out of the word. But so careless com-mouly we are, that we pass over the mercies and the judgments of the Lord without observation at all, whereby we might grow in all judgment and sound experience. It may be that some of us sometimes will desire to know somewhat out of the Scriptures touching the sacraments, touching the resurrection, touching faith, touching good works, &c. But what is it ? It is only to know it there ; it is not to have a feeling of it in our own souls. If we have the text of Scripture for proof, we think we have knowledge enough ; but for proof out of our own experience in our own souls, we look not after it. But, beloved, ye see we should have a care, as to abound in knowledge out of the Scriptures, so in sound judgment, out of a feeling experience in ourselves of the truth of that we know. Let us not, therefore, lightly pass over the things that we know out of the word, but let us labour to increase in a feeling knowledge of them in our own souls. Let us observe, in our daily experience, that as it is written, so it is indeed ; that when we hear or read such and such things out of the word, our own souls within us may give witness unto the same, and say, It is so indeed ; in mine own experience I find it to be most true. Thus the apostle exhorteth, and thus it behoveth us to do.

The next thing which here I note is, that the apostle prayceth for the Philippians, that their 'love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' which is, that their love might be founded and grounded in sound knowledge and in sound judgment, that each having help of other, and each being fur-

nished by other, they might the better 'discern things that differ,' &c. Whence I observe yet a farther continual care necessary for all Christians, and that is, that their love may abound in knowledge and in all judgment. 'Though,' saith the apostle, 'I had all knowledge, and had not love, I were nothing,' 1 Cor. xiii. 2. So, on the other side, though we say we have all love, and have not knowledge, it is nothing ; for what is all our love, if it be not grounded in knowledge and in judgment ? Then these are good when they grow up together, and each hath help of other ; and which of these soever grows up without other, like Jonah's gourd, it will quickly wither. Our care, then, must be that our love may abound in knowledge and in all judgment. In knowledge, that we may know on whom our love ought principally to be set ; and in all judgment, that, knowing whom we ought to love, we may love them whom we ought and as we ought. 'Let us do good,' saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 10, 'unto all men, but especially unto them which are of the household of faith.' Here we are taught whom we ought principally to love. We are to love all men, 'but especially them that are of the household of faith,' them that are joined unto us in the band of Christianity. And knowing that they are those whom we ought principally to love, we are to love them in deed and in truth ; and the more nearly that they are linked unto us in the bands of Christianity, the more dearly we are to love them. Otherwise, our love, if it be not in knowledge and in all judgment, may do more harm than good, even as we see that zeal doth without knowledge ; for it was in zeal, but without knowledge, that Paul persecuted the church of God extremely and wasted it, Gal. i. 14. And it was in a zeal of the law that the Jews submitted not themselves unto the righteousness of God ; but their zeal was not 'according to knowledge,' as the apostle sheweth, where he saith, Rom. x. 2, 'I bear them record that they have the zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' So in our love we may do good unto those, and shew kindness unto those to whom we ought not, if our love be not grounded on knowledge and in all judgment. And this was it which the apostle taxed in the Galatians, chap. iv. 18, where he said, 'It is a good thing always to love earnestly in a good thing.' That they loved, and loved earnestly, he disliked it not ; nay, 'It is a good thing,' saith he, 'to love earnestly.' But that their love was not in knowledge and judgment, that he disliked. They increased in love towards them that seduced them, and abated their love towards him that had taught them the truth. This he disliked, and therefore told them that 'it was a good thing to love earnestly always in a good thing.' We must love, but we must know that the thing we love is good, that the person whom we love is good. And therefore our love must abound in knowledge and in judgment.

This, then, serveth to condemn our great careless-

ness in making choice on whom we set our love, and unto whom we do good and perform duties of love. Our love should abound in knowledge out of God's word whom to love, and in judgment to perform the duties of love to whom we ought. But commonly we care not where we cast our love, but as he fits our humour, so commonly we cast our love upon him. If he will boose and drunk with us, if he will game and play with us, if he will curse and swear with us, if he will play the good fellow and run to the devil with us, then we will love him, and what we can we will do for him. Neither can it be that they should bestow their loves better, who themselves are no better. Nay, where better graces are, yet is there no better choice of our love. We commonly look rather how he suits our affections and likings whom we would love and fancy, than how he is beautified with the graces of

God's Spirit, how well he is grounded and stablished in the faith. And howsoever he be scarce sound in the faith, yet if he suit our affections and likings, we grow to more entire love with him, than with others more to be loved. If this, beloved, have been a fault in any of us, let us learn hereafter to reform it, and let our love abound more and more in knowledge and in judgment. Let us know out of the word whom we ought to love, and unto whom we ought to do good; and let us love them and do good unto them. Let neither our knowledge be without love, nor our judgment without love; neither let our love be without knowledge or judgment. Let us abound more and more in love, and in knowledge and in judgment; and let our love abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

LECTURE XI.

That ye may discern things that differ one from another; that ye may be pure and without offence, until the day of Christ.—PHILIP. I. 10.

NOW, having spoken of the apostle's praying for the Philippians, and of the things for which his prayer unto God for them was, namely, for their increase in love, in knowledge, and in judgment, that their love might abound more and more in knowledge and in judgment, it remaineth now that we speak of the ends wherfore the apostle prayed for the Philippians' increase in these graces, set down in these words, 'That ye may discern,' &c.

That ye may discern, &c. The first end wherfore the apostle prayed for the Philippians, that they might abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, was, that they might discern things that differ one from another; that is, by their knowledge out of the word, and by their judgment out of their own experience, they might discern between good and evil, virtue and vice, false and true apostles, corrupt and uncorrupt doctrine, and so might follow the good and fly the bad. The same phrase of speech that is here used, is also used in the epistle to the Romans, though not so translated in our English Bibles there as here. 'Behold,' saith the apostle there, Rom. ii. 18, 'thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and allowest the things that are excellent.' Thus it is there translated and read, as also some translate the phrase here in this place, reading thus, 'That ye may allow the things that are excellent.' But in that place to the Romans, the reading in the margin is better than the reading in the text, and is all one with the reading here used in this place of our apostle. Howbeit, the matter is not great whether reading we admit, both coming much to one; for whether we read thus, 'that ye may discern things that differ,' the meaning is, that upon trial

they might allow the things that are excellent; or thus, 'that ye may allow the things that are excellent,' the meaning is, that upon the discerning of things that differ, they may allow the things that are excellent. But I follow the reading as in this place we have it.

The first thing, then, which here I note is, the end wherfore the apostle prayed for the Philippians, that they might abound in knowledge and in all judgment, and it was, that they might try and discern things that differed, right from wrong, truth from error, religion from superstition, &c., that, being able to put a difference between them, they might allow and follow that which were good, that which they ought. Whence I observe the end wherfore all Christians ought to labour for increase in knowledge and in all judgment, and that is, that they may discern things that differ, good from evil, right from wrong, truth from error, religion from superstition, &c., that so they may be pure, and without offence, until the day of Christ, &c. For, therefore are we to follow after knowledge, that we may know what is good and what is evil, what is truth and what is error, and may be able to try the spirits, and to put a difference between things that differ one from another. And therefore are we to labour after a sound judgment, through a feeling experience in our own souls, of the truth of those things which we are taught out of the word; that having our wits exercised to discern both good and evil, we may be pure, and without offence, &c. This place of our apostle is proof pregnant enough to this purpose; where ye see that the apostle, in his love toward the Philippians, prayed for them, 'that they might abound in knowledge and in all judgment,' to this end 'that they might discern,' &c. And wherfore is it that

now we, the ministers of Christ, and disposers of God's secrets, do preach unto you the gospel of your salvation, and labour amongst you that ye may be rich in all knowledge, and in all judgment? Is it not to this end, that ye may be taught in the ways of God, that ye may be able to try the spirits, which is the spirit of truth, and which is the spirit of error, that ye may be able to put a difference between good and evil, that ye may be pure in doctrine, in life, and in manners, that ye may be without offence until the day of Christ? Yes, beloved, therefore we labour amongst you and admonish you; therefore we shew you the whole counsel of God; therefore, as much as we can, we help forward your knowledge; therefore we call upon you to observe, in your own experience, the truth of those things which ye know out of the word; yea, therefore, as the apostle, we pray that your love may abound in knowledge and in all judgment, that in this detage of the world, wherein there are so many spirits of error, so many that walk not as they ought, because they err in their hearts, ye may be able to try the spirits, whether they be of God, that ye be not deceived by them; that ye may be able to put a difference between things that differ one from another; that ye may fly the corruptions which are in the world, and be pure; that ye may hold a right course, and be without offence; that ye may deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness, &c. And if for these ends we thus do, then for these ends also ye ought, even all of you, all that hear us, to labour for increase in knowledge and in all judgment. Reading, hearing, meditating, praying, every holy course ye ought to use, that ye may increase and abound in knowledge, and in all judgment, to this end, that in such ignorance ye may be able to discern things that differ; that in such corruption ye may be pure; that in such declination ye may be without offence until the day of Christ; and that in such wallowing in unrighteousness, ye may be filled with the fruits, &c.

Very justly, then, are they hence to be reproved, that, in seeking after knowledge, even out of the Scriptures, propose rather any other end which they should not, than these which they should. For of those which do vouchsafe to search the Scriptures, many there are whose end is to pervert the Scriptures; thence to build the fancies of their own brain, and to beguile unstable souls. Such are they that, seeing the chaste spouse of Christ to lean upon the Scriptures, do, by their corruptions of the text, their corrupt glosses upon the text, their false conclusions from the text, labour to overthrow the truth, and to build their own errors. Others there are, whose end in seeking knowledge out of the Scriptures is only a vain ostentation, that men may think and speak of them as great rabbins, good expounders of the law, and very skilful in the Scriptures. Such are they of whose knowledge the apostle speaketh, when he saith, that 'knowledge puffeth up,' 1 Cor.

viii. 1; for as they regarded nothing in seeking after knowledge but a vain ostentation, so, having attained unto knowledge, they swell and look so big as if all knowledge were shut up in their breasts. Others there are, whose end is, to inform their own understanding, that they may not be ignorant in the law of their God, but may know the story of the Bible, the course and meaning of the Scriptures. Such are they that delight themselves only with the knowledge of the mysteries of God, but shew not any fruits of their knowledge in a sober, honest, and godly life. Indeed, men generally, in seeking knowledge out of the Scriptures, aim rather at every other end, than at that whereat they should. But we, beloved, may not be like unto them. Here ye see wherefore we should labour to abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. Whatsoever others do, let this be our direction what we are to do. And though the smallest number by far make the bent of their increase in knowledge the informing of their understandings, and the reforming of their lives, yet let us set in with this little number, and let this end stir up our desires to increase in knowledge. Let us labour, and let us pray that we may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, even therefore, 'that we may discern,' &c. Let us know that our increase in knowledge is nothing, if it be not for these ends, and let the desire of these ends increase our thirsting after knowledge.

My next note is from the things themselves, wherefore the apostle prayed, 'that they might abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment;' whereof the first was, 'that they might discern things that differed' one from another, that being able to see the difference of things concerning either doctrine, life, or maeners, they might in each fly that which were evil, and follow that which were good. Whenee I observe an employment necessary and behoveful for all Christians, namely, that, 'having their wits exercised through long custom, they may discern good and evil;' that, seeing the difference between things, in all kind of things they may choose the good, and refuse the bad. 'Try all things,' saith the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 21, *δοκιμάζετε*, 'and keep that which is good.' The word there used is the same with this in this place of our apostle, and it signifieth to try, to sift, to examine; and that which is here spoken unto the Thessalonians, is spoken in them unto all the faithful children of God. What is, then, the meaning of the apostle in these words? This ye must know, that then there were, as still there are, pestilent and deceiving spirits which trouble the church, and corrupt or discredit the doctrine of the gospel; and this also ye must know, that then there were, as still there are, some; which, because of such men, wilfully reject the doctrine of the gospel, and others which foolishly believe every spirit that speaketh in the name of Christ. The apostle therefore willetteth them, and in them us, neither

wilfully to reject everything, because of some wicked men, nor yet foolishly to admit everything that is spoken in the name of Christ, but to try, and sift, and examine all things by the rule of the word. And what then? When by trial we see and discern things that differ one from another, he willeth us to 'keep that which is good,' for that is the end wherefore we are to try things. So that hence we see that it is an employment very behoveful for us all, that we may be able to discern things that differ one from another, that, seeing the difference of things, we may embrace that which is good, and avoid the contrary. The same, also, we may see by the Holy Ghost's commendation of the men of Berea, Acts xvii. 11, for 'searching the Scriptures, to see whether the things that were spoken were so.' It was Paul that preached unto them; and when he preached unto them, they turned their books, and looked diligently into the Scriptures, to see whether in anything he differed from the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. And this is registered both for their commendation and our instruction, to admonish us, that we are to care that we may discern things that differ, either in doctrine from corrupt* doctrine, or in faith from sound, or in manners from a Christian and holy conversation. And why? The reason is very plain; even that we 'be not like to the beasts that perish,' as the prophet speaketh of a man that is 'in honour, and hath no understanding,' Ps. xlix. 20. For what will ye think of such a man, that cannot discern between chaff and wheat, dross and gold, sour and sweet? Will ye not say that he is like to the beast that perisheth? What, then, must ye needs say and think of that Christian that cannot discern between truth and error, religion and superstition, virtue and vice, good and evil? Any better? Nay surely; for these are as wheat and chaff, gold and dross, and not to discern between them, is not to discern between wheat and chaff, gold and dross. If, then, we will not be like unto the beasts that perish, our care must be, that, out of our knowledge of the Scriptures, we may be able to discern things that differ.

But do we thus employ our care? Nay, thus far, I have only said what we should do; but what we do, our unability to discern between things that differ one from another, too, too plainly discover. For what is the cause why so quickly we hearken unto those deceivers, that compass sea and land to make one of their profession, and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell than they themselves are? Why we are so easily seduced to believe the spirits of error, and to fall from our own stedfastness? Is it not even hence, because we cannot discern things that differ one from another? They bring unto us the fancies of their own brain, the traditions of their own church, lies out of their own legends, and we receive them, because we cannot dis-

cern them from the truth of Christ Jesus. They come unto us in the name of Christ Jesus, but bring with them the doctrine of devils, 'forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving;' and we believe them, because we cannot try the spirits whether they be of God, to see which is the spirit of truth, and which is the spirit of error. For God forbid that I should think that, if we could discern between truth and error, religion and superstition, any of us would follow their damnable heresies, by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of. Again, what is the cause why we are often deceived with the shadows of good things; with the semblance of things honest, and just, and pure; with the dim shews of virtue, and praise, and holiness of life? Is it not even hence, because we cannot discern things that differ one from another? Oftentimes we think we run well, when we run quite a wrong course; oftentimes we count that our praise, which is indeed our dispraise; and a great many of us think that 'we have Abraham to our father,' when indeed we are 'of our father the devil.' And all hence, as I think, because we cannot discern things that differ.

And yet, tell a great many of us that we know not good from evil, that we cannot discern between truth and error, right and wrong, &c., we cannot brook it, but we disdain to be counted so simple and ignorant that we cannot discern things so different. But let me but ask these questions: How is it that so commonly we fly that which is good, and follow that which is evil? How is it that so easily we are drawn oftentimes from the way of truth into error? How is it that vice, under the colour of virtue, so often doth deceive us? Is it not because we cannot discern good from evil, truth from error, virtue from vice? Either it is so, or worse; for either ignorantly we err, as not able to discern between things that differ, or wilfully we run a wrong course, as discerning well enough things that differ, but wilfully running ourselves on the rocks. Beloved, let us think of these things, and let us be ashamed of it, that we cannot discern between things that differ one from other. It is enough for us that we have spent the time past ignorantly and foolishly. Let us henceforth redeem the time, and learn to discern things that differ. If we consider the time that we have spent in the school of Christ, we may well think that now we should have so much knowledge as to discern things that differ one from another. And if truth and error, good and evil, &c., be unto us, as yet, as colours unto blind men, that we cannot discern between them, we may well think that we are blind. Let us therefore go unto Christ Jesus in his word, that we may receive sight, and see clearly. Let us read, and hear, and meditate in the holy word of God, that thence we may know 'what is good and acceptable unto God.' Let us pray, and labour by all holy means, that we may

* Qu 'uncorrupt'?—ED.

'abound in knowledge, and in all judgment,' that we may discern things that differ one from another.

The second thing wherefore the apostle prayed that the Philippians 'might abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' was, that they might be 'pure,' *τιμηνήτες*, namely, from any leaven of corruption in doctrine, life, or in manners. For so the word here used signifieth, such as are clear and free from all mixture of corruption, as white wool never dyed, fine flour never leavened. And this was so an end of the apostle's prayer, for their increase in knowledge and in all judgment, that it seemeth to be subordinate to the former end; for he would have them able to discern things that differ, corrupt from uncorrupt doctrine, &c., that they might be pure from all corruption in doctrine, life, and manners; and for both these causes he prayed that they might abound more and more in knowledge. Hence, then, I observe another employment behoveful for all Christians, namely, that they may be pure and free from all corruption in doctrine, life, or manners. For it is not enough that we be able to discern things that differ one from another, and to know what in doctrine is corrupt and uncorrupt, what in life is good and evil, and what in manners is holy and what profane; but farther also it is behoveful that we be pure from whatsoever is corrupt in doctrine, from whatsoever is evil in life, from whatsoever is unholy in manners. 'Know ye not,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. v. 6, 7, 'that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' The apostle speaketh there of the incestuous person, and having sharply reproofed the Corinthians' negligence in not punishing him, and willed them to excommunicate him, he whetteth them thereunto, saying, 'Know ye not that a little leaven,' &c., as if he should have said, Ye know very well that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump or batch, and know ye not that one naughty man infecteth and poisoneth the whole congregation? What is then to be done? 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump;' cut off that naughty man from your body, that ye may be an holy congregation unto the Lord, as ye are unleavened, as ye are called to be holy: 'for Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;' which his exhortation, as it served for that purpose, so did it lesson them, and in them us, that forasmuch as a little leaven, a little corruption, marreth and poisoneth the whole man, therefore we should purge out, we should be pure from all leaven of maliceousness and wickedness, even from all corruption whatsoever, that we may be a new lump, holy vessels for the habitation of the Holy Spirit, as we are unleavened, and holy, and pure, by our calling in Christ Jesus. And why? 'For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' Whereby the apostle implieth thus much, that as the Jews, in the celebration of the feast

of the passover, were to put away for all that time all leaven out of their houses, and only to eat unleavened bread, so we, now that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, are to purge ourselves, and to cleanse the houses of our bodies from all leaven, and filthiness, and corruption, and to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, holiness and godliness, so that for the whole time of the feast, the whole term of our life, there be no leaven, no corruption, at all found in the houses of our bodies. Can anything be more plain for that purity which ought to be in us? Much to the like purpose is that of our blessed Saviour to his disciples, where he warneth them, saying, Mat. xvi. 12, 'Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees;' in which words he warneth them, and in them us, to look unto it, that we be pure from all corruption in doctrine. And in that he doubleteth the *caveat*, saying, 'Take heed, and beware,' he sheweth how very behoveful it is to look unto it. And in that he calleth corruption in doctrine *leaven*, he sheweth both the poison of it, that it mars the whole man, as a little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump, and likewise the riddance that should be of it out of the houses of our bodies, as of leaven out of the houses in the feast of the passover. So that ye see how behoveful an employment for us it is that we be pure from all corruption in doctrine, life, and manners. And the reason is plain; for what fellowship hath truth with error? or what communion hath good with evil? We cannot serve both God and Mammon. We must fly that which is evil, and follow that which is good. Halting between God and Baal will not serve; we must 'worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve.' If we be circumcised, Christ shall profit us nothing. If there be any mixture of corruption in us, our religion is in vain. It is but one of two, either pure or impure. If we will not be impure, our care must be to be pure.

Here, then, are met withal such tolerations and indulgences, as either in policy, or upon any carnal reason, we are wont to take and allow unto ourselves. Whereas the apostle would have us purged of all corruption, we will allow some mixture of corruption, and all things shall be well notwithstanding. Again, we like not of those hot-headed fellows that precisely urge a conformity in all things, according unto the word; we cannot away with those pure men that would have us so pure, that we should not speak a word amiss, or do anything that is evil. We are men, and we must play the good fellows now and then, we must swear now and then, we must run at riot now and then, we must drink, and dance, and play now and then, more than we should; we must pass the bounds of modesty, honesty, and Christian duty now and then. And if some of us happily will not break out into such terms, yet we will think that sometimes we may adventure a little upon some breach of the law; that we may, with-

out great offence, commit such and such little sins; that a little corruption, a little yielding unto the fashions of the world, cannot do so much harm; that too much strictness and preciseness is naught; and that to stand so much upon purity and sincerity, is but to make ourselves the talk, and mock, and by-word of the people. Thus we will be moderators over the Holy Ghost, and when he seems unto us to overreach, we will bring him to the measure of our own scantling.

But, beloved, let us not deceive ourselves; God is not mocked, but what he requireth of us it standeth upon us to take care of the performance of it. The end of our calling is, that we be holy in all manner of conversation, as he which hath called us is holy. And therefore hath God chosen us in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. And Christ, our passover, is once and for ever sacrificed for us, that henceforth we should keep the feast of the passover unto the Lord for ever, so that now no leaven of corruption at all may be found in all our houses. Let us, therefore, take heed how we make tolerations and indulgences unto ourselves. Let us take heed how we suffer any leaven of corruption in the houses of our bodies, and let us rather purge out the old leaven, that we may be a new lump. Let us strive as much as possibly we can after this purity that is required of us, and let us assure ourselves that, when we have striven all that ever we can after this purity, we shall be impure enough, and too much. We see what it is that is required of us, as therefore the apostle willeth Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 22. Let us 'keep ourselves pure,' pure from corruption in doctrine, and pure from corruption in life and manners, that, as our apostle afterwards exhorteth, we may be 'blameless and pure, and the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation.' Let our care be, first to discern things that differ, that we may skill what is pure, what not, either in doctrine, life, or manners; and then, knowing that, let us care and study to be pure and sincere, and without all leaven of corruption, either in doctrine, life, or manners.

The third thing wherefore the apostle prayed that the Philippians might abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment was, that they might be without offence, *i.e.* that they might not stumble at any thing, but hold on in a constant course without

stumbling, or slipping back, or standing at a stay, until the day of Christ, when their constant perseverance should be rewarded. For the apostle's desire was, 1, that they might be 'able to discern things that differ'd,' what were corrupt and bad, and what were pure and good; 2, that being able to discern and try all things, they might keep that which were good, and might be 'pure' from all leaven of corruption; 3, that being pure from all leaven of corruption, they might keep a constant course in their purity, 'without stumbling,' or shrinking back, or standing at a stay; and for these causes he prayed that they might abound more and more in knowledge, &c. Whence I observe a third employment very behoveful for all Christians, namely, that, being in a good course, they hold on without stumbling, or standing, or shrinking; being pure and clean from all leaven of corruption, they keep themselves so until the day of Christ. 'Are ye so foolish,' saith the apostle to the Galatians, chap. iii. 3, 'that after ye have begun in the spirit, ye would now be made perfect by the flesh?' The Galatians had embraced the gospel and obeyed the truth; but now, through certain false apostles, they had fallen from the pure doctrine of Christ, and admitted some corruptions of that doctrine. And therefore the apostle reproves them sharply, and tells them that it is no course for a Christian to begin in the Spirit and to end in the flesh, but having begun in the Spirit by embracing the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, they should end in the Spirit, and hold fast that pure doctrine which they had embraced, even until the day of Christ; so that, having obeyed the truth, we are not to yield to any corruptions of the truth, or to let our hold slip, but to hold fast the same unto the end. It is for the dog to return to his own vomit, and for the sow that was washed to return to her wallowing in the mire; but the man that, having 'put his hand to the plough, looketh back, he is not apt to the kingdom of God,' Luke ix. 62. Being in a good way, we must, with our apostle, still 'endeavour to that which is before, and follow hard toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' But I have lately spoken to this purpose, and therefore now, the time being past, I will not farther trouble you; only, with the apostle, I pray 'that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment,' &c.

LECTURE XII.

Filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—PHILIP. i. 11.

IT remaineth now that we come unto the fourth and last end here mentioned, wherefore the apostle prayed that the Philippians might abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; and that was, that they might be fruitful in all good works, set

down in these words, 'filled with the fruits,' &c. In which words I note, 1, the measure of good works which the apostle wisheth to be in the Philippians, which is, pressed down and shaken together, even that they may be 'filled with the fruits of righteous-

ness.' 2. The definition of good works, in that they are called 'the fruits of righteousness.' 3. The fountain whence, or author from whom, good works, if, indeed, they be good works, are, and that is, 'Jesus Christ.' 4. The end wherunto good works, if indeed they be good works, do tend, and that is, 'unto the glory and praise of God.' So that, besides the main point, which is the apostle's desire that the Philippians might be full of good works, here hence we may know all the causes of good works. The material cause, or matter and substance, of good works is hereby known, that they are called 'the fruits of righteousness;' for this sheweth that the very matter and substance of good works is those good actions, which, as good fruit, grow and spring out of the righteousness of God in us. The formal cause or reason which causeth our works to be good works is hereby likewise known, that they are called 'the fruits of righteousness;' for this sheweth that the reason why our works are good works, is because of their conformity unto the law of God, because they are done in righteousness, according to the righteous law of God. The efficient cause or author from whom good works are, is hereby known, that it is said that they are 'by Jesus Christ;' for this sheweth that Jesus Christ worketh in us whatsoever works are good and agreeable to the righteous law of God. The final cause, or end of good works, wherunto they are to be referred, wherefore they are to be done, is hereby known, that it is said that they are 'by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God;' for this sheweth that the end wherefore we are to abound in every good work is the glory and praise of God, that his work thereby may be glorified. These are the things which these words seem unto me to contain. Now, let us see what observations we may gather hence for our farther use and instruction.

The first thing, then, which here I note, is, the rich grace wherewith our apostle would have the Philippians to abound in good works; for he prayed that they might abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, as for other ends before spoken of, so for this, that they might be 'filled with the fruits of righteousness,' that they might abound in every good work. My observation hence is, that we are not only to do the things that are good, and to work the works of righteousness, but we are to abound in every good work, to be filled with the fruits of righteousness.' To do good, and to have our fruit in holiness and righteousness, is a thing much urged, and often commanded, by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures; and it is so clear a case, that it cannot be denied or shifted, but that we are to do the things that are good, and to work the works of righteousness. Yet so cunning are we to deceive ourselves, that if at some times we have done some things well, we think we have obeyed the voice of the Lord herein, though we come far short of being filled with the fruits of righteousness. The

Holy Ghost, therefore, to meet with our foolish wisdom, and to clear the point, plainly sheweth in many places of the Scripture, that, as we are to shew forth good works, so we are to be rich in good works; as we are to live righteously in this present world, so we are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, that in our whole spirit, soul, and body, throughout our whole life, the fruits thereof may appear. 'We cease not to pray for you,' saith the apostle to the Colossians, chap. i. 9, 10, 'and to desire that ye might be filled with knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, and please him in all things, being fruitful in all good works.' The words are much like to these of our apostle; wherein ye see, he saith he prayed for them unto the Lord, that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, to the end that they might walk worthy of him, and please him in all things, and be fruitful in all good works; giving them, and in them us, thereby to understand that we are to walk worthy of the Lord, and therefore to please him in all things; that we are to please him in all things, and therefore to be fruitful in all good works, like good trees, bringing forth much fruit 'unto the glory and praise of God.' Again, 'he that abideth in me,' saith our Saviour, John xv. 5, 'and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit;' 'and herein,' saith he, ver. 8, 'is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' In which place our Saviour liketh himself unto the vine, and his disciples and children unto the branches of the vine. Now, how shall we know that we are branches of the vine Christ Jesus? If we bear much fruit in him, if we will glorify the Father, if we will know that we abide in Christ Jesus, and that he abideth in us, if we will know that we are branches of the true vine Christ Jesus, we must not be like unto the fig tree, that bare no fruit, but only leaves; but we must bear fruit, and much fruit, and much fruit in Christ Jesus. It is not here a grape and there a grape, here a cluster and there a cluster, that will serve the turn, but we must bear much fruit; neither is it wild grapes and fruit in the flesh that we must bear, but we must bear much fruit in Christ Jesus, we must be rich in the fruits of the Spirit, rich in good works. And this was it that was commended in that virtuous woman Tabitha, Acts ix. 36, that 'she was full of good works, and alms which she did,' whose example we may not pass over with a bare reading or hearing of it, without making a farther use of it than to know that it was so; but we must know that it was written for our learning, to admonish us, that as she was, so we should be, full of good works and alms-deeds,—of good works in general, and of alms-deeds in particular.

But what is the reason that we should be filled with the fruits of righteousness? We have already heard many reasons, as that we may 'please the Lord in all

things,' for so we do please him in all things if we be 'fruitful in all good works,' Col. i. 10. Again, that we may glorify God the Father, for 'herein is the Father glorified if we bear much fruit,' John xv. 8. Again, that we may know that we abide in Christ, and Christ in us, for 'he that abideth in Christ, and Christ in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit,' ver. 5. Again, that there may be none unrighteousness in us, for so shall we be free from unrighteousness, if we be filled with the fruits of righteousness. Again, because we ourselves should be as good trees, 'the planting of the Lord, trees of righteousness,' as the prophet speaketh, Isa. lxi. 3; for so shall we be known to be good trees, if we bring forth good fruit; and the more good fruit that we bear, the better trees we shall be. That, therefore, we may be trees of righteousness, we should be filled with the fruits of righteousness; that we may be the planting of the Lord, we should bring forth much fruit in the Lord; that we may be as trees planted by the water side, we should always bring forth fruit in due season. All times of the year our boughs, even the boughs of our spirit, soul, and body, should be full of the fruits of the Spirit, of the fruits of repentance, of the fruits of holiness, of the fruits of righteousness. The trees of the garden have their seasons to bear their fruit, and in their seasons they do not always take; but all times are due seasons for our bearing of fruit, and at all times our trees should be so well taken that their tender boughs should be laden with fruit.

Here then, first, beloved, take a *careat*, to beware of them that tell you that we make no reckoning of good works, that all our preaching is of an idle and dead faith, that we are afraid in our sermons to make any mention of good works, and that when we mention them, either we condemn them, or speak so coldly of them as if there were no worth at all in them. Let your own ears witness what we preach unto you, and whether they do not most untruly slander us that thus speak of us. What more do we beat upon and urge than that ye may be pure, that ye may be without offence until the day of Christ, that ye may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and abound in every good work? Answer them, therefore, out of your own knowledge, and tell them that they are 'of their father the devil, who is a liar, and the father thereof.' Ye yourselves know it, and therefore may boldly speak it.

Secondly, Let this be as a spur to prick us forward, and to stir us up to every good work. For should we be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and abound in every good work? How is it, then, that we are so barren in good works, like unto the heath in the wilderness, that bringeth forth no fruit that is good. Abound in works we do, but it is in the sinful works of the flesh, not in good works of the Spirit; and full of fruits we are, but it is of the fruits of unrighteousness, malice, cruelty, oppression, and

the like, not full of the fruits of righteousness. If there be here and there a cluster of grapes, as in the gathering after the vintage; if we do some things well, though they be nothing in comparison of the evil that we do; if, after we have run at riot a long time, at length we have some fruit in holiness; if, in the moderation and government of our affections and actions, we do more savour of the Spirit than in the common course of the world men do: then we think well of our good works, and count ourselves such as have well profited in the school of Christ. But to urge us to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, to be fruitful in all good works, to have our whole conversation holy, to shew forth the fruits of the Spirit in our whole spirit, soul, and body throughout our whole life, this we cannot brook, and this is a thing wherein the preacher may well strive with us, but wherein he shall not prevail with us. For here it is with us as with the young man in the gospel, Mat. xix., who soothed up himself as if he had been as good a man as lived, till it was said unto him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' but then he hung down the head, and went away sorrowful. So we, many of us, while it is said, Do that which is good, let your conversation be honest, have your fruit in holiness, we comfort ourselves as having observed these things; but when it is said, Abound in every good work, be ye filled throughout your whole man and throughout your whole life with the fruits of righteousness, then we hang down the head, and all the exhortations in the world will not prevail thus far with us. That the Lord shall open his hand and fill us with plenteousness in all good things, we can brook it very well; but where is he that is filled with the fruits of righteousness, to the glory and praise of his name? Some one Tabitha, it may be, may be full of good works; but with the rest it is well if they be not as bad as the worst. Let us, beloved, now that we know what we should be, strive unto that which should be. Let us, as we should be, be trees of righteousness, filled with the fruits of righteousness. As we are purged by Christ Jesus to be a peculiar people unto him, zealous of good works, so let us abound in every good work. Let us not only fly that is evil, and do that is good; but as men sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body, let our whole life and conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ Jesus. The more fruit we bear, the better trees we are; the more by our fruits we glorify God the Father, the more sure we are that we are branches of the true vine Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, give all diligence, use all holy means, and pray that we may abound more and more in the knowledge of God's will, that we may discern things that differ, that we may be pure, and without offence until the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness, and being fruitful in all good works.

The next thing which here I note is, that the apostle calleth good works 'the fruits of righteousness.' For it is as if he had said, filled with good works which are the fruits of righteousness; therefore called the fruits of righteousness, because they spring from righteousness, as the fruit from the tree. The observation, then, hence is, that good works are the fruits of righteousness. Righteousness, that is the tree; and good works, they are the fruit of the tree. So that as first must be the tree and then the fruit, so first we must be righteous, even by the righteousness of God in us, before we can do the works that are good. Now, what is our righteousness before God? Our apostle telleth us, in the third chapter of this epistle, ver. 9, even that 'righteousness which is through the faith of Christ;' for as 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness,' so our faith in Christ Jesus, 'who is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' is accounted unto us for righteousness before God. First, then, we must believe in Christ Jesus, 'whom God hath set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood,' before we can do any works acceptable unto God; and being justified by faith in Christ, then are our works good and acceptable unto God. And to this our apostle giveth testimony where he saith, Tit. i. 15, 'Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their minds and consciences are defiled.' In which words, by *pure* he meaneth them whose hearts are purified by faith in Christ Jesus, as the antithesis in the next clause sheweth, where he expresseth whom he meaneth by *impure men*, even unbelieving men. Hence, then, it is plain that when once our hearts are purified by faith in Christ Jesus, not only the things which by the law are counted unclean are clean and pure unto us, but our works also are good and holy; but till our hearts be purified by faith in Christ Jesus, neither any of the things which by the law are counted pure are pure unto us, neither is any work of ours good, but how good soever it be in show, yet it is indeed abominable before God. To the like purpose is that of the apostle, where he saith, Heb. xi. 6, that 'without faith it is impossible to please God'; where the apostle, shewing the dignity and excellency of faith, amongst other things commendeth it for this, that by it, as Enoch did, we please God; but without faith, saith he, it is impossible that any work of ours whatsoever should please God. So that our works, if they be good, they are the fruits of righteousness, even of the righteousness which is of God through the faith of Jesus Christ; otherwise, if they spring not from that root, they are not good.

Here then, *first*, learn to beware of them that tell you that our good works are that righteousness whereby we are justified before God. Ye see the apostle telleth you that they are the fruits of right-

eousness. As well, therefore, may they tell you that the fruit of a tree is the tree, as that our good works are our righteousness before God. 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' If he have said that they are the fruits of righteousness, then assure we ourselves that they are spirits of error that tell us that they are our righteousness.

Secondly, Hence learn to beware of them that tell you, that men not begotten in the faith of Christ Jesus are able to do the things that are good and pleasing unto God; for either you must not believe the holy apostle, or rather the Holy Ghost speaking by the mouth of the apostle, or else you must know that they only do the things that are good and pleasing unto God that are justified by faith in Christ Jesus; for this the holy apostle hath said, that good works are the fruits of righteousness. Either, then, our good works must spring and proceed from the righteousness of God by faith in Christ Jesus in us, or else they are not good; so that they only that are justified by faith in Christ Jesus do the things that are good. And therefore they that tell you otherwise, they are led by the same spirit of error that they are who tell you that by our works we are justified before God.

Thirdly, Let this teach us how to examine our works, whether they be good or no. Are they the fruits of righteousness? Do they proceed from a true and lively faith in Christ Jesus? Is the fountain pure whence they spring, and their end good whereunto they tend? Then be bold they are good works. Otherwise, if there be no such warrant for them, seem they never so good, yet they are not good. Examine but our works according to this rule, and surely we will not all of us be found full of good works.

The third thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith, that these fruits of righteousness where-with he would have the Philippians filled, are by Jesus Christ. Whence I observe the author of every good work in us, and that is Christ Jesus, by the grace of his Holy Spirit; for, as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' Now, if of ourselves we be not sufficient to think a good thought, but that must only be suggested by God's Spirit, then how shall we be sufficient of ourselves to do anything that is good? Nay, our apostle tells us, in the next chapter, Philip. ii. 13, that 'it is God which works in us both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure.' Neither thought of the heart, nor affection of the will, nor work of the hand, but if it be good, it is by the operation of the Holy Spirit in us. Nay, take an argument even from hence; good works they are the fruits of righteousness. Now, doth the fruit of a tree bud or grow by the labour or skill of man? Nay, he planteth and watereth, but God only gives the fruit in due season. Right so it is not in

man to do that is good ; but if he do that is good, it is of God. Work of himself he may, and to work that which is evil he is too prone of himself ; but if he work anything that is acceptable unto God, it is wholly by the Spirit of God. And why ? That God may be all in all, and that he may have the glory of all.

Let this sufficiently warn us to beware of them, and arm us against them, that would persuade us that we are able of ourselves to do that is good, at least if we be holpen by grace. If we think, or will, or do anything that is good, whatsoever fruit of righteousness it is that is in us, it is by Jesus Christ, not of ourselves (for then we had wherein to rejoice in ourselves) ; but only of his good pleasure, that by his good Spirit worketh it in us. This our apostle telleth us, and this we learn from him ; and if any man preach unto us, or teach us otherwise than this that we have received, let him be accursed.

Secondly, Let this teach us unto whom all praise is due for whatsoever good is in us. whatsoever good is in us, it is by Jesus Christ. So that our song is always to be as the song of the angels in the Apocalypse, Rev. v. 13, ‘Praise, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.’ His name is to be blessed, and the power of his Spirit is to be acknowledged, in whatsoever good work is wrought in us.

The last thing which here I note is, touching the end of good works, whieh as they are by Jesus Christ, as the author and worker of them in us, so they are to be done to the glory and praise of his name. Whenee I observe, unto what end our works must be done if they be good, and that is unto the glory and praise of God. Ye know that of the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 31, where he saith, ‘Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ As

also that of our Saviour, Mat. v. 16, where he saith, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father whieh is in heaven.’ And that of Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 12, where he saith, ‘Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you, as of evil doers, may by your good works which they shall see, glorify God in the day of the visitation.’ By which, and many other places which might be alleged to this purpose, it appeareth, that the end wherenunto our works (if they be good) must be referred, must be the glory and praise of God, that thereby he may be glorified, both by us, and by others which see our good works.

Here then, first, we learn not to credit any that shall tell us that any action of any unregenerate man can be good. For what is the end of such men in their actions ? Is it the praise and glory of God ? Nay, it is their own praise, and the praise of men which they seek after in all the most glorious things that they do. But hence we learn that so our works are good works, if they be by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Secondly, Henee we learn that the end of our good works is not to be, that thereby we may merit heaven, bnt that thereby God may be glorified. Nay, if our works be therby to merit heaven, they cannot be to the glory and praise of God. For how much soever is given to merit, so much is taken from the glory of God. Either, therefore, we must renounce all merit, or else whatsoever we say, our works are not to the glory of God.

Thirdly, This teacheth us, whatsoever we do, to do it to the honour and praise of God. Let this, therefore, be our end in all that ever we do, that thereby God may be glorified ; and let us know that, so only, that which we do is good, if we do it to this end.

LECTURE XIII.

I would ye understand, brethren, that the things which have come unto me, are turned rather to the furthering of the gospel ; so that my bands in Christ are famous throughout all the judgment-hall, and in all other places ; insomuch, that many of the brethren in the Lord are boldened through my band, and dare more frankly speak the word.—PHILIP. I. 12-14.

WE have spoken of the apostle’s exordium, or entrance to his epistle, and therein of such things as whereby he testified his love towards the Philippians, thereby to win their attention unto him ; and likewise of such observations as that Scripture offered, together with such uses and instructions thence as seemed most behoveful for us. Now, in the rest of this chapter, is set down the apostle’s narration. Wherein, first, he tells them of his present state, how at this present when he wrote unto them matters stood with him ; and this he doth from ver. 12 to 19. Secondly, he tells them from hereafter what his hope is, namely, that all shall turn to his own salvation, to the further-

ing of the gospel, and to their joy and comfort ; and this he doth from ver. 19 to the end of the chapter. The end and drift of the whole narration was to comfort the Philippians, that they should not be swallowed up of overmuch heaviness for his bonds, nor therefore shrink from their good profession.

Now, touching the former part of the apostle’s narration, wherein he tells them in what state his matters now presently were, what effect the bands which he sustained for Christ his sake, and the gospel’s, at that present had, 1, therein we have the proposition of the narration, or the main point wherof he speaks ; 2, the confirmation or proof thereof, by two notable

effects of his bands ; 3, an amplification of the latter effect, together with an answer to an exception which might be taken. The proposition, or main point of the former part of the narration, is this, that his persecution and imprisonment rather furthered than hindered the gospel, set down ver. 12. Now this is confirmed and proved by two notable fruits and effects of his persecution and imprisonment ; the former whereof was this, that by occasion of his bands, Christ and his gospel were known in Nero his court in Rome, and in other places ; and many brought unto the faith of Christ Jesus, both in Nero his court and in other places, set down ver. 13. The latter fruit and effect of his persecution and imprisonment was this : that through his bands and constancy therein, many of the brethren were emboldened, more freely and frankly, to profess and preach the gospel of Christ Jesus than before, set down ver. 14, so that by his bands the gospel was both farther dispersed into many places, and likewise more fruitfully embraced in the hearts of many brethren. The amplification of this latter fruit and effect of his bands is by way of distribution. For of those brethren, that through his bands were emboldened to preach Christ more frankly than before, all of them were not of one mind in preaching Christ, but some preached Christ through envy and strife, not purely and of a good mind, but to add affliction unto his bands ; others preached Christ of a good mind towards the gospel of Jesus Christ, and of love unto the apostle, set down ver. 15-17. And because it might be said that he had no cause to rejoice in that any preached Christ not of a sincere and good mind, he answereth that, and saith, that he rejoiceth, and thinketh he hath good cause so to do, that Christ is preached, be it sincerely or not sincerely, let them look to that, but he is glad that Christ is preached, set down ver. 18. Thus much for the general order and meaning of these words in this former part of our apostle's narration. Now, let us a little more particularly examine the meaning of these words, wherein are set down the proposition, or main point, and the proof thereof.

I would ye understood, brethren, that the things which have come unto me. What were those? Even all those things which befell him in his sailing towards Rome, at his first going thither from Jerusalem, but especially his bands in his first imprisonment at Rome. For this ye must understand, that Paul was twice prisoner at Rome : once in the beginning of Nero his reign, about the second year of his reign ; and again in the latter end of his reign, about the thirteenth year of his reign. For when, being at Jerusalem, he was put from Claudius Lysias unto Felix, and again from Felix unto Festus, and still the Jews hunted after his blood, at length he was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar, unto the emperor of Rome, then Nero ; wherenon he was sent thither, and after many perils and dangers escaped by the sea, he came to Rome,

where he was prisoner two years at the least, Luke testifying so much : at which time he wrote divers epistles unto the churches which he had planted in the east, as unto the Galatians, unto the Ephesians, unto the Colossians, unto the Thessalonians, as some think, and this unto the Philippians. But as the apostle hoped that the Lord would, as we read in the next chapter, so, at this time, he did deliver him from the mouth of that lion Nero, both he being less cruel now than afterwards he grew to be, and the Lord having ordained that by him many of the Gentiles should hear the gospel, unto whom it had not as yet been preached. This, as I said, was about the beginning of Nero his reign. Again, about the latter end of his reign, he was cast into prison at Rome ; and then he was indeed devoured by that lion, slain by that cruel tyrant and persecutor, Nero.* Whatsoever, then, in this epistle is spoken of the apostle's bands, ye must understand it meant of his first imprisonment at Rome. By the things, then, which came unto him in this place, we must understand his bands in his first imprisonment in Rome. Now, what of these ? These, saith the apostle, are 'turned rather to the furthering of the gospel,' than to the hindering of it, contrary to the hope of the adversaries of the gospel, which did cast him into prison ; for they hoped that his bands would prevail much to hinder the course of the gospel ; but he tells the Philippians that the Lord had turned them rather to the furthering than to the hindering of the gospel. But how could that be ? Very well ; for so his bands in Christ, *i. e.* which he sustained for Christ his sake, and the gospel's, were famous throughout all the judgment-hall, *i. e.* throughout all the emperor's court, and in all other places, both of the city and of other countries. But how were his bands famous in all these places ? Namely, because by that occasion the gospel came to be known, and to be believed by many in all these places. This was the first fruit of his bands ; by them the gospel was far dispersed. Again, through his bands, and constancy therein, many of the brethren in the Lord, many pastors and teachers of the church, were emboldened more frankly and freely to speak the word, *i. e.* to profess and preach the gospel, than before they durst. And this was the second fruit and effect of his bands : by them the teachers of the word took courage to speak the word more boldly than before they had done. Plain therefore it was, that, contrary to the hope of the adversaries of the gospel, his bands were turned rather to the furthering than to the hindering of the gospel, inasmuch as by occasion of his bands both the gospel was farther spread and dispersed than before, and likewise the preachers of the gospel more encouraged and emboldened to preach the gospel than before. Thus much of the sense of the words. Now to the observations.

Here might be noted the apostle's carefulness to

* Euseb., lib. ii. cap. xxv.

take away the scandal and offence of his bands, where-with the Philippians might haply be troubled, and thereat take offence. And thence might be observed the care which pastors ought to have of taking away whatsoever may breed any doubt, or occasion any offence amongst the people ; the neglect of which care doth often so much harm, that their silence in the church were as tolerable as their carelessness to remove all scruples and occasions of offence from the people. But I rather come unto the main point here to be noted, which is the apostle's asseveration that his bands and imprisonment turned rather to the furthering than to the hindering of the gospel, far contrary to the expectation and hope of those adversaries of the gospel that cast him into prison.

Whence I observe, that the persecutions and afflictions of the saints of Christ Jesus do rather further than hinder the gospel, rather increase than diminish the church. Ye know the burdens and afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt, the house of their bondage under Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Exod. i. Come, saith Pharaoh, 'let us work wisely with the people of the children of Israel, lest they multiply, and it come to pass that if there be war, they join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us,' &c., ver. 10. Whereupon, 'by cruelty they caused the children of Israel to serve,' ver. 13, and made them 'weary of their lives by sore labour in clay, and in brick, and in all work in the field, with all manner of bondage, which they laid upon them most cruelly,' ver. 14. Yea, and a commandment came from the king, unto the midwives, that so many sons as were born to the women of the Hebrews, they should kill them, ver. 15. Notable practices indeed that they should not multiply. But what saith the Holy Ghost ? 'The more they vexed them, the more they multiplied and grew,' ver. 12. The Egyptians they vexed the Israelites lest they should multiply, but the more they vexed them, the more they multiplied ; the Egyptians they laid upon them all cruel burdens to hinder the growth of the church there, but the Lord turned that which they did rather to the increasing than to the diminishing of the church there. Ye know also the great danger of the three children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the land of their captivity, Dan. iii. 8, how grievously the Chaldeans accused them unto Nebuchadnezzar for not worshipping the golden image which he had set up, and how the king, in a great fury and rage, commanded them therefore to be cast into the midst of a hot fiery furnace, ver. 20, which also was done, as the king commanded, ver 21. So that now it was like that idolatry should increase, and that the worship of the true God of Israel should decrease, because of this cruel execution upon these three children, for the maintenance of his holy worship, and refusal to worship the image. But lo, how the Lord turned this to the spreading and propagation of his holy worship throughout all the

dominions of Nebuchadnezzar. For the Lord having wrought a mighty deliverance for the three children, in saving them from the power of the fire, so that neither an hair of their head was burnt, nor their coats changed, nor any smell of fire was upon them, ver. 27, both all the nobles and great princes which came to worship the golden image were spectators of this great wonder which the true God of Israel wrought, and Nebuchadnezzar himself 'blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,' ver. 28, for delivering his servants, that yielded their bodies rather than they would serve or worship any God save their own God ; and likewise made a decree, that none of all his people should dare to speak any blasphemy against the God of Israel, ver. 29. Thus the Lord turned their practices and devices against his holy worship unto the propagation of his holy worship, so that when it seemed almost to have perished it was farther dispersed. And as this may be seen in Moses and the prophets, so also it is clearly overruled in the new testament. You know the rage of Satan, and his instruments against our blessed Saviour ; from his cradle to his cross, how did they persecute him, and all to destroy and to abolish his kingdom for ever ! How was he persecuted, and forced to fly from place to place, even in his infancy ! How often was he tempted by the devil in the wilderness ! How despitefully was he entreated by the high priests, the scribes, and pharisees, and the rest of the Jews ! How was he mocked, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with a crown of thorns, accused, condemned, and crucified between two thieves ! And when they had taken him and crucified him, then they thought they had made sure work for the rooting out of his name, and of his doctrine, for ever. But so the Lord provided, that by his cross his kingdom was established, and by his death the life of his church was preserved, so that his sufferings and his wrongs were turned to the best ; and that which they presumed would have hindered the gospel, turned to the furthering of the gospel. Not to trouble you with more proofs to this purpose, ye know the persecutions and afflictions, the bands and imprisonment, of our apostle. And when his adversaries had now gotten him cast into prison, they thought that now he should be safe from preaching any more in Christ his name ; that the rest, when they should hear of him, should be daunted, and not dare to preach the gospel ; and indeed that thus the whole course of the gospel should most certainly be hindered. But such was the Lord his providence, that he turned their devices into the imagination of a vain thing ; and that which they thought should have been to the hindering, he turned rather to the furthering of the gospel. For, as himself here witnesseth, by occasion of his bands, both the gospel was farther propagated, even unto the emperor's court, into all places of the city of Rome, and into many other countries, in all which places many thereby were

brought unto the obedience of the faith, and of the gospel of Christ Jesus ; and likewise thereby the gospel took better settling, and deeper rooting in the hearts of many of the pastors of the church, insomuch that many of them were so far from being daunted by his bands, that thereby they were a great deal bolder than before, and durst more frankly and freely profess and preach the gospel than before. So that whether we look into Moses or the prophets, unto Christ or his apostles, still we shall find that the persecution, afflictions, and bands of God's saints rather further than hinder the gospel, rather make for than against the increase of Christ his kingdom upon earth, rather help than hurt the church.

But how comes this to pass ? The adversaries of God's saints intend no such thing. No indeed ; their whole desire and endeavour in troubling and persecuting the saints of God, is to make havoc of the church, and to hinder or abolish the gospel of Jesus Christ. How then ? Is it by the merits of the saints, by the virtue of their sufferings, by the force of their blood which they shed for the gospel ? No, nor so ; for all their merits are not of that worth, all their sufferings and deaths have not that virtue, that thereby the gospel should be furthered, or the church increased. How, then, comes it to pass that the persecutions and sufferings of the saints do further the gospel ? 1. By the power of Christ. 2. By the example of the saints' constancy in their sufferings. 3. By the freedom of the gospel then when the saints are bound for the gospel. For such is the power of Christ, that howsoever their enemies do band themselves against his saints, so to work the subversion of the gospel, and of the truth of Christ Jesus, yet he can, at his pleasure, and doth, make their devices to be of none effect ; nor only so, but turneth them to a clean other end than they had imagined. And therefore the psalmist saith, Ps. ii. 1, ' Why do the heathen rage, and the people murmur in vain ? The kings of the earth band themselves,' &c. As if he should have said : The enemies of Christ plot and practise all that ever they can against him, and against his truth and gospel ; but all in vain, for the God of heaven sees them, and laughs them to scorn ; he either frustrateth their wicked plots and practices, or turns them to his own glory. Again, when men see the saints' constancy in their sufferings, how little they are daunted with the fury of their adversaries, how patiently they suffer their bands and persecutions, how, by the mighty power of God assisting them and strengthening them, they do, even in their death, triumph over death ; this very example of their constancy brings many unto the church, and much furthereth the gospel. And hereupon is that known saying, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Again, the word of God is not bound, though the saints do suffer even unto bands, as the apostle saith, 2 Tim. ii. 9, ' I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bands,

but the word of God is not bound.' And therefore in their bands for the gospel's sake, they may preach and publish the gospel so much, that their bands may be to the furthering rather than to the hindering of the gospel ; as we read that our apostle in this his imprisonment at Rome, for two years' space, ' preached the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ, without let,' Acts xxviii. 31 ; and that he wrote almost as many epistles there unto the churches as he wrote else at all. And thus ye see both that the persecutions of God's saints rather further than hinder the gospel, and likewise how it cometh to pass that they do so.

Now, the use which we are to make hereof is, hence to be comforted in all our persecutions and troubles, which the wicked raise up against us. For what though they seek all occasions against us, because of the truth which we profess ? What though they bring us before kings and rulers, judges and great officers, and there unjustly accuse us, or arraign us as evil doers for the gospel's sake of Christ Jesus ? What though they prevail to get us cast into prison, or thrown out of our livings, or delivered unto death for the hope of our profession ? It may be that they may have their will upon us, and bring their wicked purposes against us to pass ; but what of all this ? Is thns the gospel furthered ? Doth the Lord turn these things to the enlargement of his church ? A chip, then, for all these, or all that man can do against us ! Nay, herein we joy, and will joy, that by our sufferings or deaths the gospel is furthered, and the church eularged. If, together with our bands, the gospel also were bound ; if, together with the torment or fall of our bodies, they could ruin and pluck down the walls of our church : then might we well shrink at our sufferings and wrongs, then might we well be vexed in our souls for the malicious practices of the wicked against us. But, seeing the Lord turns all that they do unto us to the glory of his name, to the furtherance of his gospel, and to the propagation of his church, howsoever they intended the clean contrary, we may well rejoice and be glad when they say or do all manner of evil against us for Christ his sake and the gospel's. And thus in all our persecutions and sufferings we may resolve, that therein the Lord will do that which shall be to the glory of his name, the good of his church, and the furtherance of his gospel. If our deliverance from our enemies or our sufferings will make most hereunto, then will he deliver us, as he did Daniel from the lions, the three children from the hot fiery furnace, and our apostle from this his imprisonment. But if our sufferings or deaths will make most thereunto, then they that hate us shall have their will over us as they had over Stephen, our apostle in his latter imprisonment, and over many blessed martyrs which are dead in the Lord. Be we then delivered, or not delivered, from the will of our enemies, still this is our comfort, that in his gracious

providence the Lord turneth all to the furthering of the gospel. Only let us be constant in all our troubles, let us cleave steadfastly unto the Lord, and let us not love our lives unto the death, that men, seeing our holy constancy in our sufferings for Christ his sake, and the gospel's, may acknowledge the mighty power of God in strengthening us to endure such sufferings for the truth's sake, and so may be won to embrace the same truth with us. And howsoever we be bound, yet let us give proof, as much as we can, that the gospel is not bound. By teaching, and writing, and how else we can, let us ever in our bands labour to turn many unto righteousness, and to enlarge the kingdom of Christ Jesus. So shall our sufferings be but as the pounding of spice, to make our smell the sweeter, or as the pressing of the palm-tree, to spread the gospel farther. Our enemies' main purposes shall be disappointed, and the name of our great God shall be glorified.

Again, this serveth to condemn the faintness and backsliding of many in their persecutions and troubles. Much seed sown in stony ground; many, that when storms and persecutions arise because of the word, by and by are offended. A calm sea they can, but a storm they cannot, brook. They can well endure to have Christ crucified preached unto them, but if Christ come unto them with his cross, they cannot away with him. Nay, then many faint, and many fall away. What then? Such fainting at the things whereby the gospel may be furthered! Such falling away, for fear of the things whereby the bounds of the church may be enlarged! Can your lives or livelihoods be more dear unto you than the propagation of the church, the furtherance of the gospel? 'If any man come unto me,' saith our Saviour Christ, Luke xiv. 26, 27, 'and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever beareth not his cross, and cometh after me, cannot be my disciple.' Where our blessed Saviour teacheth us, that if anything in the world, even our lives, be more dear unto us than his glory and the increase of his kingdom, then we cannot be his disciples. If we do not bear our cross, whatsoever it be that is laid upon us, we cannot be his disciples. And withal I add, that howsoever they seemed to admire the word, and to kiss the gospel, yet if, when the wind bloweth and the storm ariseth, they start aside like a broken bow, surely they were never born anew by the immortal seed of the word of God; for that endureth for ever, as true in itself, so grounded in him that is begotten thereby, in such sort that it is dearer unto him than his life. Let them then look unto it, that when storms arise fall away from the hope of their profession. If they faint or shrink, it is more than they should do, because the Lord may turn their sufferings to the furtherance of the gospel. But if they fall away, it is as if they refused to take up their cross, and to follow Christ. And whereas their lives

should not be dear unto them unto the death for the furthering of the gospel, their lives and livelihoods are so dear unto them, that to save them they hinder the gospel. Let this be our rule; the Lord turneth the persecutions of his saints to the furthering of the gospel, therefore in persecutions and troubles we may not faint or slide back.

Again, beloved, this may teach you not to doubt of the truth, or to dislike of the professors of the truth, because they are disgraced, persecuted, and cruelly entreated. Ye shall not want enough that will insult over them in their troubles, that will tell you they are odious men, and men unto whom such sufferings and troubles most justly do befall, and so cunningly will labour to discredit the truth which they profess. But be not deceived; whatsoever of this kind can be said, no doubt was spoken upon Paul's bands and troubles, so to discredit the gospel which he preached. And it cannot be but that the world should hate, and persecute, and revile the children of the light, because they love darkness better than light; but howsoever the world hate them, and whatsoever it practiseth against them, the Lord shall turn all their sufferings and their wrongs to the furthering of the gospel. Let not therefore the persecutions and troubles of God's saints be any argument against the truth, but rather for the truth, and rather let them cause us to like than to dislike them. It is Satan's art to turn their troubles to the slander of them, and of the truth; but the Lord turneth them to the furtherance of the gospel, and of their reckoning in the day of Christ. And let this be spoken touching this, which is the main point principally to be noted in these words.

The next thing which I note is, that the apostle, in his proof that his bands were turned rather to the furthering of the gospel than the hindering faith, that his bands in Christ, *i.e.* which he sustained for Christ his sake, were famous throughout all the judgment-hall, and in all other places; whereby he meaneth that, by occasion of his bands, Christ and his gospel came to be known, and to be believed, both in the emperor's court and in the city of Rome, and in many other countries; which, as it sheweth a notable fruit and effect of the persecution of God's saints, namely, the propagation of the gospel, which falleth in with the former observation, so, further, hence I do observe the power of God to raise up a church unto himself where he will, and by what means he will: in kings' courts, in great cities and countries where the gospel is scant heard of, or little regarded, there he can, if he will, even by the bands of his saints, raise up a church unto himself; no place so profane, so far without God in the world, but if he will have his name there called upon, there it shall be called upon. Rome at that time (it is likely) was as heathenish as now it is superstitious. Nero his court (it is like) was then as profane, and as far without God in the world as might be; and the countries thereabout, it is like,

had not so much as heard of Jesus, nor knew what the gospel meant. Yet here the Lord would have his church, and therefore he saith unto Paul, Acts xxiii. 11, ‘Be of good courage Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.’ Here the purpose of God was revealed, and, according to this purpose, he brought Paul to Rome; and even by his bands begat there children unto himself in Nero’s court, in the city of Rome, and in the countries thereabout. Elisha may send his servant with his staff, and the Shunamite’s son not be raised; but if the Lord send his servant whither he will, a church shall be raised to the honour of his name, by what means he will, for he can do what he will, and by what means he listeth he useth to do his will.

Let no man, then, measure the Lord by himself. If he send thee whom he hath called to the work of his ministry, to the prince’s court, or to the great city, go when he sendeth thee, and fear not thy weakness, but remember his strength that sendeth thee. If thou go thither bound with a chain for the gospel’s sake, even by thy chain thou shalt so preach unto their hearts, that thou shalt gain children in the faith. As it is all one with him to save with many or with few, so it is all one with him to gather his church by this or that means which pleaseth him best. Whatsoever be thy weakness, he will perfect his strength in thy weakness; only be of good courage, and thou shalt see the power of the Lord.

Again, let no man think any place so profane, but that the Lord may have his church there. Kings’ courts are commonly not the best; pride, pleasure, ease, and abundance of all things, commonly chokes the word therein, so that it is unfruitful. Nay, saith Amaziah to Amos, Amos vii. 13, ‘Prophesy no more at Bethel, for it is the king’s chapel, and it is the king’s court.’ In great cities, likewise, sins most commonly rage and reign. No lewdness or wickedness so grievous and abominable, but there it is so rife that it overfloweth all; yet in these places the Lord hath his church, even those that know him, and believe in his holy name. Even in Jezebel’s court he hath an Obadiah to hide and feed his prophets; and in sinful Sodom he hath a righteous Lot, whose soul is daily vexed with their unlawful deeds. Far be it, therefore, from us to condemn where the Lord hath not condemned. Who are his he only knoweth, but that in all places he hath those that are his, we are not to

despair, yea, even at this day in Caesar’s court, and in sinful Rome itself.

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle saith, that many of the brethren in the Lord were emboldened through his bands, and durst more frankly speak the word; whereby he meaneth, that through his constancy in his bands and sufferings, many pastors and teachers were emboldened to profess and preach the gospel more freely than before. Whence I observe another notable fruit of the persecution of God’s saints, namely, the emboldening of others to the profession of the gospel more freely; which, as it serveth very notably for the proof of the main point, that the persecution of God’s saints rather furthereth than hindereth the gospel, so may it be a strong consolation for the children of God against the time of persecution. It may be that some of us, in the time of the peace of the gospel, may doubt how we shall stand in the time of persecution, and fear, that when the trial shall come, we shall not quit ourselves like men; but let us pluck up our hearts, and be of good comfort. When we shall see the constancy of other of God’s saints in their sufferings, then shall we also be emboldened freely to profess the truth of Christ Jesus; the Lord shall turn the constancy of them in their sufferings, for the hope of their profession, unto our encouraging and emboldening to make a good profession. Thus we find it to be in Joseph of Arimathea, of whom it is said, that he had been the disciple of Jesus before his passion; but he showed it not till then, and then he went even to Pilate himself, and professed himself his disciple, and begged his body, and entombed it, Mat. xxvii. 57. The like we find to be in Nicodemus, of whom it is said, that till the death and passion of Christ Jesus, he only came unto him by night, for fear of the Jews; but then he professed himself, and joined with Joseph of Arimathea to bury him most honourably, John xix. 39. By whose examples, as also by the example of these here mentioned in our apostle, ye see how the Lord, by the sufferings of his saints, gives that boldness and courage unto others of his children, which neither themselves felt, nor ever any saw in them before. Let us not, therefore, fear how we shall stand when persecution cometh, but let us depend on the Lord, who alone giveth strength and perseverance, and he will strengthen us to stand.

LECTURE XIV.

Some preach Christ even through envy and strife; and some also of good will. The one part preacheth Christ of contention, and not purely, supposing to add afflictions to my bands; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? yet Christ is preached all manner of ways, whether it be under a pretence or sincerely; I therein joy, yea, and will joy.—PHILIP. i. 15-18.

NOW followeth the amplification of the latter effect and fruit of the apostle’s bands, which was the

third thing noted in the former part of the apostle’s narration, set down in these words, ‘Some preach

Christ,' &c.; in which words the apostle sheweth that of those brethren in the Lord which, through constancy in his bands, were emboldened to preach Christ more frankly than before, all of them did not preach Christ with the same mind, nor upon the same motive, nor for the same end; but some with a corrupt mind, moved through envy and strife, and to the end to add more afflictions to the apostle's bands; and others of a good mind, moved through love, and to the end that with the apostle they might defend the gospel. So that here is set down a distribution of such as preached Christ, according to the diversity of the minds wherewith, of the motives wherupon, and of the ends wherefor they preached Christ. The distribution is this, that some preached Christ sincerely, and others not sincerely, set down ver. 15. The mind wherewith, the motives wherenon, the end wherefor the worse sort preached Christ, is set down ver. 15, 16. Likewise the mind wherewith, the motives wherenon, and the end wherefor the better sort preached Christ, is set down ver. 15, 17. Touching their minds, the better sort preached Christ of good will, and a good mind toward the apostle, and toward the gospel; but the worse sort preached Christ not purely, but of a corrupt and bad mind toward the apostle. Touching their motives, the better sort preached Christ even upon love towards the apostle, and towards the gospel; but the worse sort preached Christ upon envy towards the apostle, and to stir strife and contention in the church among the brethren. Touching their ends, the better sort preached Christ to help the apostle in the defence of the gospel, knowing that he was appointed of God for the defence of the gospel; but the worse sort preached Christ to add more affliction to his bands, thinking by the contentions which they raised in the church, both to grieve him, and to exasperate Nero against him. Thus I resolve the order and meaning of these words.

The thing which hence I observe is, the great difference of such as preach Christ in the church of God. For not to speak of such as set abroad false doctrine in the church, whereby the foundation of our faith is either plucked down or shaken, or the church is burdened with vain traditions and commandments of men, which are not after God: as the apostle in his day, so we in our day, may see that of those that preach Christ truly and soundly for doctrine, some preach Christ as they should, and others otherwise than they should; some may be called good, and others bad preachers of Christ. Which difference of preachers, as then it did, so now it doth come to pass, through the diversity partly of the minds wherewith they preach, partly of the motives which cause them to preach, and partly of the ends wherefor they do preach. For in some, it is very clear that they preach the glad tidings of your salvation unto you of a good mind towards God, towards you, and towards the gospel of Christ Jesus, only desiring, and that from the ground

of their hearts, the glory of God, the salvation of your souls, and the growth of the gospel of Christ Jesus. But in others, it is greatly to be feared that they preach Christ of a naughty and bad mind, affecting rather their own glory than the glory of God, seeking rather their own things than the things which are Jesus Christ's, hunting after yours rather than you, minding anything else rather than the growth of the gospel of Christ Jesus. Again, in some, it is very clear that the motives drawing them to preach Christ is a sincere and holy love, both towards you—that they may present you holy and unblameable before God in that day, and in the mean time may rejoice over your faith, love, and holy obedience—and likewise towards the truth, that the truth by them may be known in all places. But in others, it is greatly to be feared that their coming to preach Christ is upon spiteful envy towards the faithful servants of Christ Jesus, maligning the gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit in them, upon a contentious humour casting up and down the firebrands of schisms, strifes, and debates, to set the church on fire, or upon every other inordinate affection rather than upon love. Again, in some, it is very clear that the end of their coming to preach Christ is to glorify the Lord, to beget children in the faith, to comfort the humbled and afflicted soul, to build up the ruined walls of Sion, and to turn them that belong unto the Lord unto righteousness, that 'they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus.' But in others, it is greatly to be feared that the end of their coming to preach Christ is to grieve the soul which the Lord would not have grieved, to cast dung in the faces of their brethren, to add affliction unto them that already are afflicted, and, under the name of the church, to wound the church even with a deadly wound. I wish indeed, even from my very heart-root, that all that preach Christ in our church at this day were of the better sort, and that our day might have this exception from the apostle's day. And I do assure myself that there were never more in our church, than at this day there are, which preach Christ of a pure and good mind, upon a sincere and holy love towards the church and towards the truth, to gain men unto the church, and to ground men in the truth. Neither do I, or dare I, pronounce of any but that he so preacheth Christ. But as I said, it may greatly be feared, that in this our day there are such as do not so preach Christ. For as the apostle reasoneth, 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'Whereas there are among you envying, and strife, and divisions; are ye not carnal, and walk as men?' So do I reason touching this point: whereas there are amongst us such as are ever obscuring the lights of our church, ever girding at them whose graces have been and are most eminent in the church, ever crossing and thwarting the things most behoveful for the church, ever snarling and catching at every advantage

they can take, ever casting firebrands of schisms and contentions in the church, are there not that preach Christ upon envy and strife, and not purely, but of purpose to grieve? As I wish there were no such diversity among them that preach Christ, so this diversity for me might have been buried in silence, if this scripture had not forced me so much as I have spoke.

The use which I make hereof is, for the minister and preacher of the gospel, who hence may take good notes whereby he may know whether he be a good minister and preacher of the gospel. The first note whereby he may know this is, if he speak the word; for it is not the wisdom of man, or the traditions of the church, or the sophistry of the schools, but it is the word of the ever-living God that he must speak, if he be a good minister and preacher of the gospel; as it is written, 1 Pet. iv. 11, 'If any man speak, let him speak as the word of God;' whereby is implied, that if he speak not so, he speaketh not as he ought.

The second note whereby he may know this is, if he speak the word frankly and boldly, for it is not for the Lord his ambassador to be babish or bleatish, or for fear to keep back any part of the Lord his counsel; but, as John unto Herod, so he must speak boldly unto the faces of the greatest, and fear not the face of any man, as it is written, Isa. lviii. 1, 'Cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sin,' whereby he implieth that this is most requisite in the Lord his prophet and minister, that he boldly do the will of him that hath sent him, whether he be to pluck up, or to root out, or to destroy and throw down, or what else soever.

The third note whereby he may know this is, if he speak the word boldly, and of a good mind; for it is not enough that he speak the word, and speak it boldly; but if he will approve himself for a good minister and preacher of the gospel, he must also speak out of a good mind towards God to glorify him, towards them that hear him to save them, and towards the truth of Christ Jesus, to make it known in all places, as it is written, 1 Tim. iii. 9, that they should 'have the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,' or in a sincere and good mind.

The fourth note whereby he may know this is, if he speak the word upon a sincere and holy love; for this also is requisite, that he preach the word not upon strife and contention, to move brawls and stirs in the church, but upon love towards him, who hath commanded to feed his sheep and his lambs; upon love towards the sheep of Christ, that they wander not as sheep without a shepherd; and upon love towards the word, that it be not hid as under a bushel, if he be a good minister and preacher of the word.

The last note whereby he may know this is, if he speak the word to the end that God may be glorified, his church builded, and his gospel defended. If, I say,

he find these notes in himself, hereby he shall know that he is a good minister and preacher of the word; otherwise if he speak not the word, but the devices of his own brain, or speak the word coldly and fearfully, fearing men's persons, or speak the word of a corrupt and naughty mind, or upon an envious and contentious humour, or to grieve the godly and hinder good things, let him know that he is not a good minister and preacher of the word. Let every man, therefore, that is set apart unto this work, examine himself of these things, and so let him judge of himself, and where he finds a fault in himself, let him mend that which is amiss.

Now if any man shall here except and say, How then? If the case thus stand among the preachers of the word, that some of them preach Christ even through envy and strife, not of a pure and good mind, but rather to vex the soul of the righteous than to build the church of God, how shall we brook to hear such, how shall we love or like such, how shall we take joy or comfort in such? Whereunto, 1, I answer out of the rule of charity, that because we know not who do so preach Christ, therefore we are to presume the best of them whom we hear. The Lord only knoweth the hearts of men, and the purposes and intents of their hearts. 'Who art thou, then, that judgest? he standeth or falleth to his own master.' 2. I answer out of the apostle in this place, that if Christ Jesus be truly and soundly preached, we are to take great joy and comfort therein, and willingly and gladly to hear them that deliver the truth soundly, with what mind soever, and to what end soever it is, that they do speak the word. That is for them to look unto, it is for us to joy in the other. Hence, then, I observe that that minister and preacher of the word is gladly and joyfully to be heard, that preacheth Christ and the doctrine of the gospel soundly and truly, with what mind soever, upon what motive soever, or to what end soever he preach Christ and his gospel. To which purpose also is that of our Saviour, Mat. xxiii. 3, where he willeth to hearken unto the scribes and pharisees, sitting in Moses' seat, whereby he meaneth that the doctrine which the scribes and pharisees delivered 'faithfully out of Moses, was gladly to be received, howsoever in their actions and lives they were justly to be noted; and the reason is, because the word is the Lord's which they bring, with what minds soever they bring it, or how vicious or bad soever they be that bring it. And tell, I pray you, which of you would much look at the mind or affection of the messenger towards you, or other qualities in him, which would bring you a bill signed from the prince, for some pension or living for you; if he should faithfully deliver the bill from the prince, would ye not joyfully receive it? How much more gladly, then, and joyfully ought ye to receive the word of the Lord, wherein is your life, when it is faithfully delivered from the prince of heaven and earth, with whatsoever mind and affection the minister thereof deliver it! If Christ

crucified be preached, if the holy word of life be truly and soundly delivered, this should so warm our hearts and glad our souls, that other things whatsoever should not greatly trouble us.

This then, first, serveth for the confutation of their error that cut themselves from us, so that they neither will hear the word of us, nor communicate in the sacrament with us, because of some defects in our church, because of some blemishes in us. For, I demand, is the word of truth truly taught with us, are the sacraments rightly administered with us, do we labour amongst our people with uncorrupt doctrine? Then, surely, if there were the same mind in them that was in the apostle, they would so rejoice in this, that they would brook all things the better for this. If we be defiled in our minds or in our lives, everything that we touch is likewise defiled. What! to you? Nay, but to us. The word that we preach shall save you, and the sacraments which we administer shall profit you, how fruitful or unfruitful soever they be unto us.

Secondly, This serveth for the reproof of them that, not cutting themselves from us yet, cannot brook to hear the word of such of us as they think have galled them, and spoken the word with an hard mind towards them. For thus commonly it is said, He is a good preacher, he delivers good and sound doctrine, he

teacheth the word faithfully; but in his sermons I see he saith many things upon a stomach against me, with a mind to gird me, and of purpose to note and brand me before all the people, and therefore I cannot brook to hear him, I take no comfort in the hearing of him. But Paul was of another mind; for though there were that preached Christ of a bad mind towards him, through envy and strife touching him, and of purpose to add affliction to his bands, yet that Christ was preached, that gladded him, that rejoiced his heart. And so would it each of us, if we were so singly and sincerely affected towards the gospel as he was; whatsoever mind the preacher carried towards us, yet would we most gladly and joyfully hear the word at his mouth. It were indeed best of all, if they that speak the word were, as in doctrine so in life, uncorrupt, and that they spake of a good mind always, and upon love. But if they preach Christ soundly and truly, we are not so much to be troubled what their affection or what their life be. If persecution should come, then we would be glad if we might hear the word preached, and not curiously look with what mind it were delivered. Seeing the word, and the worth and price thereof, is the same, now let us, with the apostle, rejoice and be glad if Christ be preached, whether it be under a pretence or sincerely.

LECTURE XV.

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and by the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as I fervently look for and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all confidence, as always, so now, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.—PHILIP. I. 19, 20.

NOW followeth the latter part of the apostle's narration, wherein he tells the Philippians what success he hoped his bands, and the practices of those brethren which imagined mischief against him, should have. And the sum of it is, that he certainly hoped and knew that his bands, and all the practices of the wicked against him, should turn to his salvation, and to their good and comfort, by his coming again unto them. First, then, the apostle setteth down the proposition, or main point for his hope hereafter, in these words, 'For I know,' &c. Secondly, he setteth down the means whereby this shall come to pass, namely, through the prayer of the Philippians, by the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and according to his own faith and hope, in these words, 'through your prayer,' &c. And thirdly, he explicateth what salvation he hopeth for, and assureth himself of by these means, as, first, the salvation of his soul, in that by these means he hopeth that in nothing he shall be ashamed, but that, with all confidence, Christ shall be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death, in these words, 'that in nothing,' &c.; and secondly, the salvation or deliverance of his body out of prison, to their good and comfort, in ver. 25, 26. For the meaning

in general, then, of these words, it is as if the apostle had thus said, They by preaching Christ suppose to add affliction to my bands, that when Nero shall hear that so many preach Christ, and that so much strife is among them, I, as the chief man and maintainer of that way, may either be forced to desist from preaching of Christ, and so bring a shame on myself, or else may be put to death; but I know that this which they practise against me shall, through your prayer and by the help of God's Spirit, and according to my certain expectation and hope, turn to my salvation, even to the salvation of my soul, because of my confident constancy in the defence of the gospel, whether it be by life or by death, and to the salvation and deliverance of my body out of prison; so that neither shall I be put to shame for leaving the defence of the gospel, nor put to death for standing in the defence of the gospel. This I take to be the order and meaning of these words in general. Now it will be needful that yet a little more particularly we sift and examine the meaning of them: 'For I know,' &c.

These words, ye see, contain in them a reason of something that went before. Before, the apostle had said, 'If Christ be preached, whether it be under a

pretence or sincerely, I therein joy, yea, and will joy.' Will joy; why? 'For I know that this,' &c. I know; how? Even by the revelation of the Spirit, and by warrant out of the word. What did he know? 'I know,' saith he, 'that this,—This! What? Even that this chain wherewith I am bound, and this practice of some brethren in the Lord, to bring me to shame by leaving the defence of the gospel, or to bring me to death if I stand in the defence of the gospel,—'I know,' saith he, 'that this shall turn to my salvation.' Now, what is meant by salvation, all do not agree. Some think he meaneth thereby his bodily deliverance out of prison, as the word is often used for a bodily deliverance, as where it is said of Moses, Acts vii. 25, that 'he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God, by his hand, would have given them deliverance,' *εντηγίαν*, as here it is said, and often elsewhere. Others think he meaneth the salvation of his soul in the day of Christ, as the word is most of all used. But I think the apostle may be understood to speak of both, whether we consider the opposition between *διάψις* and *εντηγίαν*, or the matter of the Philippians' prayer. For what was the affliction which they supposed to add unto his bands? Even this, that he as the chief, by the threats of Nero, should be forced to leave the defence of the gospel, to his shame and the hazard of his soul; or if he should stand in the defence of the gospel, should be delivered unto death. Now, in opposition to this, he saith that whatsoever they supposed, he knoweth that this, even this their practice against his constancy or his life, should turn to his salvation, even the salvation of his soul, through his constancy in the defence of the gospel, so that in nothing he should be ashamed, &c.; and likewise, to the salvation and deliverance of his body out of prison, quite otherwise than they had intended. And again, the Philippians' prayer, no doubt, was for both these, even that he might abide constant, so that in nothing he might be ashamed, and that he might be delivered from the mouth of the lion. And for these causes I understand salvation, in this place, both of soul and body, in such sort as hath been said. 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation.' How? By what means? First, through their prayer, praying for his constancy and deliverance; secondly, by the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which should be given unto his servant to help him every way against all practices; and thirdly, according to his fervent desire, for so the word is translated, Rom. viii. 19, or according to his earnest expectation and hope, whereof he should surely not be deceived. 'I know,' saith he, that by these means, 'this shall turn to my salvation.' How to his salvation by these means? That is, in that thus it should come to pass, that in nothing pertaining to the defence of the gospel he should be ashamed, but that with all confidence and liberty to speak in the defence thereof, as always, so now, where he strengtheneth his hope by his experience, Christ

should be magnified and honoured in his body, whether he should live by preaching the gospel, or should die by sealing it with his blood. Whereupon he signifieth his own indifference to either life or death, and the conveniency of his life in respect of them; and then he tells them how this shall turn to his salvation in the deliverance of his body out of prison. And thus much for the opening of the meaning of these words in particular, which, as ye see, is somewhat intricate and obscure. Now let us see what notes we may gather hence for our farther use and instruction.

The first thing which I note is in the main proposition, in that the apostle saith that he knoweth that this casting of him into prison, and this practising against him being in prison, shall turn to his salvation, not only of his body, by deliverance out of prison, but of his soul, because of his constancy in the defence of the gospel. Whence I observe, what fruit the godly may assure themselves shall follow upon their sufferings and wrongs, even their salvation in the day of Christ Jesus. For though the apostle might know this some other way than now the godly can, even by the revelation of the Spirit, as, no doubt, he did know of his deliverance out of prison, yet may the godly thus far go with the apostle, and say, I know that my sufferings and wrongs shall turn to my salvation in the day of Christ Jesus. But how shall they know this, or assure themselves of this? Even because the Holy Ghost hath said, Rom. iii. 28, that 'all things work together for the best unto them that love God.' In which place, amongst many other arguments for the comfort of the godly against afflictions and troubles, he useth this, drawn from the providence of God, who so wisely ordereth and disposeth all things, that even the crosses and afflictions of his children work for the good of his children, even their best good, their salvation. Be it then tribulation, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword, imprisonment, or what cross soever that do press us, we know that all things, even all crosses and calamities, work together for the best unto them that love God; so that, if we love God, we need not shrink at all these, or any such like, but certainly know that they shall turn to our salvation. More plain, it may be, to this purpose will be thought that of the apostle, where he saith, Rom. viii. 17, 'that if we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with Christ;' and again, 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Christ;' where it is to be noted that the apostle saith, This is a sure word, this is a true saying, that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. This, then, is a promise of the Lord unto his children that love him, that if they suffer with him for his sake and his gospel's, they shall also reign with him and be glorified with him. So that either the godly must doubt of the Lord his promises, all which are *yea and amen*, most certain and sure, or else the godly may assure themselves that their sufferings and

their wrongs shall turn to their salvation in the day of Christ Jesus. For what better assurance than that which is grounded on the Lord's promise ? Or what plainer promises can there be than these of the apostle in these places, or rather of the Holy Ghost by the apostle ? And therefore the apostle saith in another place, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7, 10, that 'it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them which trouble others ; and to them that are troubled, rest, when the Lord Jesus shall shew himself from heaven with his mighty angels, and shall come to be glorified in his saints.' It is a righteous thing with God ; righteous, indeed, for his justice' sake, to recompence tribulation to them that trouble others, and righteous, for his promise' sake, to recompence rest to them that are troubled. Because, then, God is righteous, and keepeth promise for ever, therefore the godly may assure themselves that their sufferings and wrongs shall turn to their salvation in the day of Christ Jesus.

Here, then, is a notable consolation for all the godly in Christ Jesus, against all crosses, persecutions, and troubles whatsoever. As Christ was to suffer many things, and so to enter into his kingdom, so the godly in Christ Jesus are, through many tribulations, to enter into the kingdom of God. But the comfort is, that they shall all turn unto their salvation in the day of Christ Jesus, when they shall be 'for ever in the presence of the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; when they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, nor the sun shall light on them, nor any heat, when he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them ; and the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall govern them, and wipe all tears from their eyes,' Rev. vii. 15-17, as the Lamb himself witnesseth, ver. 14, touching them that have 'suffered tribulation, and washed their long robes in the blood of the Lamb.' The flesh, I know, will suggest and say, In the meanwhile our ease is hard, no man with us, every man's hand against us ; we hunger and thirst, we are reviled and persecuted, we are cast into prison, and made the talk and wonder of the world ; we are driven to many hard shifts, and put to shrewd plunges ; but what of all this, when we know that these shall turn to our salvation ? Be they what they will, how great they will, how lasting they will, yet they are but light, and but for a moment, in respect of that far most excellent and eternal weight of glory which they cause unto us, as our apostle witnesseth, where he saith, 2 Cor. iv. 17, that 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, causeth unto us a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory.' Here is the fruit and consequent of our affliction, glory ; our affliction causeth unto us glory ; and here is both the smallness and the shortness of our affliction, in comparison of that glory which shall be revealed : be it never so great and heavy, it is but small and light in comparison of that far

most excellent glory ; be it never so long and lasting, it is but for a moment, in comparison of that eternal weight of glory laid up for us in the heavens. Howsoever, therefore, when we suffer any cross, persecution, or trouble, these things, for the time, be grievous and unpleasant unto us, as Heb. xii. 11, 'no chastising for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous,' yet, seeing 'they bring the quiet fruit of righteousness unto them that are thereby exercised,' seeing they cause unto us 'a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory,' seeing they shall 'turn to our salvation,' let us be of good comfort, whatsoever in this kind doth befall us. And let us, as the apostle willeth, 'run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God.' And whatsoever our sufferings be, let it be with us as it was with the apostle, that with him we may say, 2 Cor. i. 5, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth through Christ.'

Again, here is a good ground and warrant for us against that uncomfortable doctrine of doubting of our salvation. For, if we may assure ourselves that our sufferings and our wrongs shall turn to our salvation, then may we assure ourselves of our salvation. Yea, but it will be said, What an argument and reason is this ! Paul might, therefore we may ! I say it is a good one, because, upon the same ground that he might, we may. Yea, but he might know this by the revelation of the Spirit, which now we are not to look for. True ; but he might also know this out of the holy Scripture, where the Lord hath passed his promise for this, and so we may ; and on the same promise whereon he might build his knowledge and assurance, on the same may we and all the faithful children of God build our knowledge and assurance, the promise being made unto all that love God and are in Christ Jesus. Many doubts, indeed, we have, and full of distrustfulness we are oftentimes, even the best of us ; but yet ye see that upon good ground of God's promise, by the example of our apostle, we may assure ourselves of our salvation, if, as the apostle did, so we do, belong unto Christ Jesus—at least if we suffer persecution and trouble for his sake ; for so far this place will go, that if we suffer persecution and trouble for Christ his sake, then we may assure ourselves of our salvation, because we may assure ourselves that our sufferings and troubles shall turn to our salvation. Suffer not yourselves, therefore, to be deceived by those uncomfortable teachers of doubting, which teach that not any man, to whom it is not revealed by the Spirit in particular, can be sure of his salvation, but only in an uncertain hope. As this place doth shew, that such of the godly as suffer persecution and trouble may assure themselves that their troubles shall turn to their salvation, and so con-

sequently may assure themselves of their salvation, so many other places do evidently convince that so many as are in Christ Jesus may and ought to assure themselves of their salvation. But I have divers times heretofore spoken of this point more at large. Let us now, therefore, proceed.

If any man, therefore, here ask, how and by what means it could come to pass, that this the apostle's imprisonment, and this practising against him in his imprisonment, could turn to his salvation, himself in the next words shews the means to be, the Philippians' prayer, the help of God's Spirit, and his own hearty and earnest expectation and hope: 'I know, &c., through your prayer,' &c. Of which three, two, namely, their prayer and his hearty expectation and hope, were indeed means; but the third, namely, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, was the author, which by and according to these means turned his sufferings and wrongs to his salvation. Howbeit, in a general signification of means, we may say, that he knew that by and according to these means this that he suffered, and that they practised against him, should turn to his salvation. Whence I observe, how, according to the promise, the sufferings and wrongs of God's children turn to their salvation, namely, by the help of God's Spirit, through the prayer of the church, according to their faith and hope that are troubled and afflicted. For through the prayer of the church, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which dwelt in him in all fulness, is given unto the godly to help them in their troubles; and he, according to their faith and hope in him, if they put their trust in him, helpeth them, and turneth their sufferings and their wrongs unto the best, as it is written, Ps. cxlv. 18, 'The Lord is near to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him faithfully;' the Lord is near in the day of trouble to help, and to turn all to the best. But unto whom is he thus near? Even unto them that call upon him. What! to all that call upon him? Nay, to all that call upon him in faith and in truth, believing in him, and putting their trust in him. And that unto such he is near to such purpose, even through the prayer of the saints and of the church, may appear by the story of Peter's imprisonment, Acts xii. 5, who being in prison, and earnest prayer being made of the church unto God for him, was delivered by an angel out of prison. Thus the Lord by his Spirit worketh for his children through the prayer of the saints, and according to their faith and hope in him. So that thus we are to resolve, all afflictions and troubles work for the best, and turn unto salvation. But unto whom? and how? Unto such as Paul, unto the elect of God, the redeemed of Christ, the sanctified by God's Spirit, the members of Christ his church, by the help of the Spirit, through the ministry and prayers of the church, and according to their faith and hope in Christ Jesus.

First, then, here can be no hope, nor shall be any help unto such as either are out of the church, or are

in the church, but not of the church. For albeit such may have sufferings and wrongs, yet shall they not turn to their salvation. Neither can they turn unto salvation, because they are not for Christ his sake or the gospel's, to which kind only the promise is made. Nay, unto such aliens from the covenant of promise, their troubles in this life are but the beginnings of that fearful judgment which in flaming fire is reserved for them against that great day.

Secondly, Hence we learn that even unto the godly in Christ Jesus, their sufferings and wrongs turn to their salvation, not for any their merits, or through the virtue of their sufferings, but through the prayers of the saints, &c. If we think upon merit, we may well think that our apostle might as well have stood upon merit, as the best that live could; nay, in sufferings and wrongs he was more abundant than the best that lives is, as that place to the Corinthians sheweth, 2 Cor. xi. Yet he stands not upon them, but that his troubles turn to his salvation, he imputes it to the prayer of the church, and to the help of God's Spirit, according to the faith and hope which God had wrought in him by his Spirit, and by his example teacheth us so to do. Nay, he utterly disclaimeth all merit of salvation by affliction, and by his example teacheth us so to do, where he saith, Rom. viii. 18, 'I count that the afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory which shall be shewed unto us.' Whence it is plain, that because there is no proportion between the sufferings of this life, and the reward of eternal glory, therefore the sufferings of this life do not merit the reward of eternal glory. Whatsoever therefore any merit-monger shall tell you, touching the merits of our sufferings, trust it not; for it is not for our merits by them that they turn to our salvation, but 'through your prayer, and by the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.'

Now, to speak somewhat more in particular of the means. First, I note, that the apostle saith, that he knoweth that this shall turn to his salvation, through the Philippians' prayer. Whence I observe the power and efficacy of the prayers of the church, poured out for the afflicted members of Christ Jesus, which is, that through the prayers of the church their troubles turn to their salvation. 'The prayer of a righteous man' saith James, chap. v. 16, 'availeth much, if it be fervent.' Here is a condition requisite in prayer, if it be powerful with God, that it be fervent, and proceed from an holy zeal; and being such, it availeth much, and hath great power with the Lord, as to save the sick, to stay, or to bring rain, &c., as it is in that place, John xv. 7. Now, if the prayer of one righteous man be of such power with the Lord, how much more the prayer of the church! Again, chap. xvi. 23, 'If ye abide in me,' saith our Saviour, 'and my words abide in you, ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' And again, Mat. xxi. 22, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.'

And again, ‘ Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, if ye believe, ye shall receive it.’ From all which places I note, that the prayers which shall have power with God, first, they must be the prayers of the righteous, of them that are engrafted into Christ, of them in whom the word of Christ dwelleth ; and, secondly, they must be fervent, they must be made in Christ his name, they must be made in faith ; and then, we being such, and our prayers being such, whatsoever we shall ask, be it for ourselves or be it for others, we shall receive it. And if the prayers of every such shall have such power with God, much more shall the prayers of the church have such power with God. And, therefore, ye see how often the apostle requesteth the prayers of the church for him. as Eph. vi. 18, Col. iv. 3, 2 Thess. iii. 1. And in his Epistle to Philemon, there he professeth, as here he doth, that he trusteth through their prayers to be given unto them by deliverance out of his bands, therein commanding himself to their prayers.

A good lesson for us, to stir us up unto publice and private prayer, both for ourselves and for others, seeing they are so powerful with God, as to bring his blessings and graces both upon ourselves and upon others. And this lesson is as needful as it is good, especially in this our day, wherein there is such neglect

both of public and private prayer unto the Lord : private prayer so rare, that if it be used by any, it is noted by many, and they straightway censured, as thinking themselves more holy than other men ; and publice prayer so little regarded by some, that very seldom they are present with the congregation in publice prayer. I cannot stand of it ; only I say, he that neglecteth the means unto grace, he shall never find grace.

Secondly, Hence I observe a duty of the church in publice prayer, which is, to pray for the afflicted members of Christ Jesus ; for the apostle, in saying that he knew that this should turn to his salvation through their prayers, therein stirreth them to pray for him. And see the points wherein the church is to commend them in their prayers unto God : as, first, that the Lord may turn their affliction and trouble to their salvation ; secondly, that he will help them by his Holy Spirit in every needful time of trouble ; thirdly, that they may so stand in the defence of the truth of Christ Jesus, that in nothing they may be ashamed ; fourthly, that the Lord will strengthen them with strong faith and hope in him ; fifthly, that Christ may be glorified in their body, whether it be by life or death. Thus the church should pray, and thus the afflicted should desire the church to pray.

LECTURE XVI.

And by the help of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, as I fervently look for and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all confidence, as always, so now, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.—PHILIP. I. 19, 20.

ONE thing hence I observe, which is, that not for our prayers, or for the prayers of the church for us, but through our prayers, and through the prayers of the church for us, the Lord giveth his grace unto us. And therefore the apostle saith, ‘ I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayers,’ not for your prayer. And to Philemon, ver. 22, ‘ I trust through your prayers I shall be given unto you.’ Neither do we ever read that for our prayers, as for the merit and worth of them, any grace is given unto any. Neither do I build this note upon this ground, as if because it is said through, therefore it cannot be for our prayers. For I know that we are saved through Jesus Christ, and yet for Jesus Christ, even for his merit’s sake, so that the phrase barely considered cannot infer the note ; but hereon it is builded, that it is so said through, that neither ever it is, nor can be said, that for our prayers any grace is given unto us. For not for our prayers’ sake, not for the merit and worth of our prayers, doth the Lord hear us and grant us our requests, but for the promise’s sake, which of his own free grace he hath made unto our prayers. He hath passed his promise, Mat. xxi. 22, that ‘ whatsoever we shall ask in prayer in

his name, if we believe, we shall receive it,’ and he hath bidden us ‘ ask and we shall receive, seek and we shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto us,’ Mat. vii. 7. Because, then, he hath promised grace unto our prayers, he is entreated for grace through our prayers. Ask and have ; first ask, and then have ; and the better beggars the greater getters. For it is not with the Lord as with us ; we say a great beggar would have a good nay-sayer, and unto whom but even now we have given, we love not that they should by and by come again and beg of us. But I say it is not so with the Lord, but of the greatest beggar he is most entreated, and the oftener we come a-begging to him, the more welcome we are unto him ; for he loves to be entreated, and being entreated he promiseth to give, and so through our prayers he gives, even for his promise’s sake, but not for our prayers’ sake, for they, when they are best, are so full of imperfections, that they merit nothing but to be rejected. Seldom but we are troubled with wandering by-thoughts ; often we pray for things, and against things, without submitting of our wills unto the Lord’s will ; often we pray not in faith towards God ; often not in love towards our brethren, often coldly, often hypocritically ;

and when not so but that our prayers might justly be turned into sin unto us? Causes, therefore, they are not for which the Lord bestoweth any graces upon us, but means only through which we receive graces needful for us, for the promise' sake made in Christ Jesus.

Far be it, therefore, from us to stand upon the merit of our prayers, as if for our prayers' sake we deserved any grace to be bestowed upon us. Let us, as we ought, pour out fervent prayers unto the Lord in faith, and in Christ his name, and assure we ourselves we shall be heard. But withal let us know that it is for his promise' sake made unto our prayers, and for his Christ his sake which offereth up our prayers. Whatsoever be our state and place, let us not slack this service, neither let us presume upon any merit by this service. If we lift up pure hands unto the Lord in his temple, in our houses, or in our chambers, he will hear us, and though not *for* our prayers, yet *through* our prayers, he will be entreated of us. Let it be enough for us that he will hear us, and let this most of all glad us, that for his Christ his sake, and for his promise' sake, he will hear us. And let this suffice to be spoken, touching the first means in particular, that through our prayers and the prayers of the church for us, all things work together for the best unto so many of us as love God, and are in Christ Jesns.

The next means whereof the apostle speaketh is the help of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, whereby, he saith, he knew that this should turn unto his salvation: 'I know,' &c. Where the Spirit is called 'the Spirit of Jesus Christ,' as because of his proceeding from the Son, so because of his dwelling in him in all fulness, as also because Christ sendeth him into our hearts, and by him worketh his will in us. And thus, also, and for these causes, I take it, he is called in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. viii. 9, and 'the Spirit of the Son' in the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iv. 5. But, to omit many things which might here be noted upon this occasion, that the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ Jesus, because they are not things specially here intended by the Spirit, the principal thing to be noted is, that the apostle saith that he knew that this which he suffered by his bands, and by the practices of the wicked, should turn to his salvation by the help of God's Spirit, by whom the Father and the Son work in us and for us. Whence I observe the true cause, indeed, whereby the sufferings and the wrongs of God's children turn to their salvation, and that is, by the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Lord, by his Spirit, helpeth them, and turneth their heaviness into joy, and their sufferings into the quiet fruit of righteousness in the heavenly places. 'Thou, Lord,' saith the prophet, Ps. xxx. 3, 11, 'hast brought my soul out of the grave: thou hast kept my life from them that go down to the pit. Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy:

and thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.' Where the prophet sheweth that it is the Lord that helpeth us, and delivereth us when troubles compass us about; that it is the Lord that lifts us up from the gates of death, and putteth an end unto all our troubles; that it is the Lord that wipeth all tears from our eyes, and turneth our heaviness into joy. And so Peter, Acts xii. 17, being delivered out of prison through the prayers of the church, professed that the Lord had brought him out of prison. Through their prayers he was delivered, but it was the Lord that delivered him; their prayers were the means, but the Lord was the author of his deliverance. Again, 'Behold,' saith our blessed Saviour, Rev. ii. 10, 'it shall come to pass, that the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life.' Which words were spoken immediately to the church of Smyrna, but so that they serve also for our use. Wherein the godly are both warned of persecution and affliction which they are to look for in this life, and persuaded likewise by sundry motives not to fear them. 'Behold it shall come to pass, that some of you shall be cast into prison;' here is the advertisement of such afflictions as they are to suffer. But the exhortation is, 'Fear none of those things which ye shall suffer.' And the motives to persuade us not to fear them follow: as, first, who is the contriver of all the persecutions and troubles which we suffer? Even the devil: 'The devil shall cast you into prison.' He always kindles the fires of persecution against the church; as also it is said in another place, Rev. xii. 15, that he 'easts out of his mouth water after the woman, like unto a flood.' He blows the bellows unto all the practices of the wicked. Secondly, What is the end wherefore we suffer affliction and trouble? Not for any harm unto us, but that we may be tried: 'That the trial of our faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found to our praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ,' as the apostle Peter speaketh, 1 Pet. i. 7. Thirdly, What is the durance of our afflictions? We shall have tribulation 'ten days,' a while, a short while; an evening doth heaviness last, and then joy cometh in the morning. As also the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv, 17, that our afflictions are but light, and but 'for a moment' in comparison of that far more excellent and eternal weight of glory which shall be shewed unto us. Lastly, What is the reward of our afflictions? The reward which our blessed Saviour in mercy promiseth is this, that he will 'give unto us the crown of life.' As also James saith, chap. i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to all that love him.' Whatsoever, then, our afflictions be, they turn, ye see, to our salvation, by the help of the

Lord. Sometimes in the day of trouble he breaketh the cords of the wicked, and delivereth us; and sometimes he suffereth them that hate us to have their wills over us, but suffereth us not to be tempted above that we [are] able, but giveth the issue with temptation, that we may be able to bear it. And always so he provideth, that in the end he turneth our troubles to our salvation. He doth it, even he alone doth it, and none but he can do it.

A point wherein we will all of us seem very loath but to be thoroughly persuaded. For, who is he that will not seem to give full assent unto that truth which hath been delivered, that it is the Lord that helpeth us in our troubles, and that he turneth them to our best? But tell me, I pray you, whence is it that in the day of trouble we faint and droop, and hang down the head? Whence is it that when we are persecuted, reviled, slandered, oppressed, imprisoned, and hated of men, we sink under the burden, and are ready to fall away from the hope of our good profession? Whence is it, that in the days of poverty, sickness, or other adversity, we are oppressed with heaviness, and hardly will be comforted? Is it not for that we have not yet learned this lesson, that all this shall turn to our salvation by the help of God? Yes, surely, the taking out of this lesson would rid us of all such passions when any troubles do assault us. For how could the things cast us down which we know should turn to our salvation by the help of God? Let us now learn it, and let it teach us to fear none of those things which we do or shall suffer; but seeing, by his help, all shall turn to our salvation, let us abide faithful unto the death.

Again, let this teach us, in the day of our trouble, to lift up our eyes unto the Lord. Let others say, as it is in the prophet, Ps. cxxi. 1, 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.' That is, let others look for help from the arm of flesh, but let us say with the prophet, 'Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, which hath made both heaven and earth.' Let others fly unto other means, and never look unto the Lord when troubles do assault them, but let us so use other means, that principally we look unto the Lord, and put our whole trust in him. For, by his help, whatsoever is said or done against us shall turn to our salvation. And let this be spoken touching the second means in particular, that by the help of God the sufferings of the godly shall turn to their salvation.

The next means whereof the apostle speaketh, is the means according to which the apostle saith, this, 'By the help of God, and through the Philippians' [prayers], should turn to his salvation, and that is according to his sure hope, 'As I heartily look for,' &c. Where, to signify the strongness and sureness of his hope, he useth two words, *ἀποκαραδοσία* [and *ἐπιπίστημι*], both expressing thus much, that his hope was such that he expected the thing he hoped for, as

they that, earnestly looking for a thing, stretch out the head to look for it. Whence I might observe what a hope the hope of the faithful is, namely, not a doubtful and uncertain hope, but a strong and sure hope, whereby they do as certainly assure themselves of the thing they hope for, as they that, with stretched necks, look for the thing that is by and by to follow. But the observation hence principally to be gathered, whereto that will follow, is this, that according to our hope and faith in him, so doth the Lord (through the prayers of the saints) turn our sufferings and our wrongs to our salvation; so that, by the help of God, and through the prayers of the saints, our sufferings turn to our salvation, but so that we certainly hope that, by the help of God, through the prayers of the saints, our sufferings shall turn to our salvation. In us, therefore, it is required that we certainly hope and believe in the promises of the Lord, if the promises of the Lord be made good unto us. When two blind men came unto our blessed Saviour, and prayed him that they might receive their sight, Mat. ix. 28, 29, he said unto them, 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' And they said, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.' As here faith was required in these blind men, that they might receive their sight, so in us all hope is also required, that we be partakers of the Lord his promises. Hath the Lord promised that all crosses and calamities shall work together for the best unto those that love him? And do we hope that the Lord will make good this his promise unto us? According to our hope so shall it be unto us. If we doubt not of the Lord his promises, but hope certainly in him that hath promised, then may every one of us, in all our troubles, say with the apostle, 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation, according to my certain hope.' But if we doubt and distrust the Lord, and say in our hearts, How can it be? I cannot conceive it, doubtless the Lord shall not help us, the prayers of the saints shall not prevail for us, nor shall our sufferings turn to our salvation. And therefore we read that the faithful had always their hope so strong, that they builded even their prayers thereon, as David, where he saith, Ps. xxv. 21, 'Let mine uprightness and equity preserve me, for my hope is in thee.' As if he should have said, According to my hope that thou wilt preserve the just and upright man, so, O Lord, preserve me. And so, very often in the Psalms, the prophet desireth performance of the Lord his mercies, according to his hope in him; and therein plainly sheweth that our hope must be surely fixed in the Lord, if we will be partakers of his promises.

Here, then, again we are armed against that uncomfor-table doctrine of doubting of our salvation. For we are certainly to hope that, according to the promise of the Holy Ghost, our sufferings and wrongs shall turn to our salvation, by the help of God, through the prayers of the saints. And are we to know that,

according to our hope, the promise of the Lord touching this thing shall be made good unto us? So here we are taught. How, then, are we to doubt of our salvation, and not otherwise to know it than uncertainly? Hope, say they, we may to be saved, but certainly assure ourselves of our salvation we cannot. Is, then, hope any prejudice unto certainty? Doth not the apostle say, Heb. vi. 19, that 'hope is as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,' whereby we may lay so sure hold on the promises of God in Christ Jesus, that we may certainly assure ourselves of our salvation? Again, doth not the apostle say, Rom. v. 4, that 'hope maketh not ashamed'? i.e. deceiveth not him that hopeth, because, as the child of God hopeth, so he findeth. And doth not our apostle here in some sort describe hope to be even a certain and earnest expectation of that we hope for, according whereunto it is certainly done unto us? And, notwithstanding all this, may we hope, but not be sure, to be saved? Indeed, if our hope were only uncertain as theirs is, then were we to doubt as they do. But our hope is certain, being grounded on God's promises, and therefore we so hope that we are sure to be saved. Thus, then, I reason from this point of hope, we may certainly hope to be saved, therefore we may assure ourselves of our salvation.

Again, this may teach us not to be secure upon the Lord his promises. He promiseth, and he performeth. What then? May we sit us down and say, As he hath promised so shall it be done, howsoever matters stand with us? Nay, beloved, let us not deceive ourselves. In ourselves there must be such graces as are required of us, or else the promises do not belong unto us, nor shall ever do us any good; yea, and either he must give those graces which are required of us, or else we can never have them; as in this place the promise is that our affliction, if we belong unto Christ, shall turn to our salvation. But how? According to our faith and hope. Either these graces must be in us, or else that promise belongeth not to us. And how shall we have these graces, unless he which requireth them give them? So, therefore, in all things let us build upon the Lord his promises, that we look unto the things required of us to be partakers of the promises. And look what means he hath ordained for the working of those things in us by his Holy Spirit; let us in all fear and reverence use those means, and pray unto the Lord to sanctify them.

Now, to go forward, what was it that the apostle so heartily looked for and hoped? That is set down, 1, negatively; 2, affirmatively. 1. That in nothing he should be ashamed. 2. That with all confidence, &c. In which points standeth one part of the salvation whereunto he knew his sufferings should turn by and according to those means already mentioned. For how should his sufferings turn to his salvation by those means? Thus: he hoped that thus it

should come to pass, that in nothing pertaining to the defence of the gospel he should be ashamed, but that 'with all confidence,' &c.

The first thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith, that he hopeth that in nothing he shall be ashamed, i.e. that shame shall never befall him for leaving the defence of the gospel. Whence I observe, both that it is a shame to leave the defence of the gospel, and that a godly care in this behalf is needful in every Christian, that this shame may never befall him; which care, and regard of which shame, how little it is reckoned of in these our days, doth too much appear by the number of shameless apostates and backsliders, which, hearkening unto the serpent, eat of the forbidden fruit, which, opening their ears to that enchanting whore, drink themselves drunk with the cup of her fornications, and forsake the truth of Christ Jesus. But let us hearken to the apostle, and 'let us hold fast the profession of our hope,' Heb. x. 23. Do we hope in Jesus Christ? Do we hope that in nothing touching the profession of the truth of Christ Jesus we shall be ashamed? Let us hold fast this hope, and let us pray, that this hope may continually be confirmed in us, and that according to this hope we may stand fast until the day of Christ Jesus.

The second thing which I note is, that the apostle saith that he hopeth that, with all confidence and liberty to speak in the defence of the gospel, Christ shall be magnified and honoured in his body, whether it be by life, that he live and preach the gospel, or by death, that he be put to death, and seal the gospel with his blood. Whence I observe another godly care needful in every Christian, which is that God may be glorified in him whether he live or die. 'Glorify God,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'in your body, and in your spirit, for they are God's.' Where the apostle, by way of exhortation, commendeth this duty unto every one of us, that we glorify God both in our bodies and in our spirits, by conforming our whole man in all obedience unto his will. And why? for both our bodies and our spirits they are God's, and they are bought for a price by him that hath died for both, that we should not henceforth in either live unto ourselves, but in both unto his glory, which died for us, and rose again.

And let this be enough to warn us to beware of dishonouring God in our bodies, or in our souls, either by shrinking from a good profession, or by giving our members weapons of unrighteousness, unto any kind of sin, to serve it in the lusts thereof. Neither let us be so besotted as to think that we are not as well to be sanctified in our bodies as in our souls; or that God is not as well to be glorified in our bodies as in our souls; but let us know that we are to be sanctified throughout, in our spirit, and soul, and body, and that God is to be glorified in our whole spirit, and soul and body. Let this, therefore, be our care, that

God at all be not dishonoured by us, but that in our whole man he may be honoured.

The last thing which here I note is, how the apostle was confirmed and strengthened in these his hopes, and that was by his own experience, for he hoped that 'as always, so now.' Whence I observe how the hope of a Christian is nourished and increased. It is begun and grounded upon God's promises made in Christ Jesus, but it is strengthened and increased by observation of the Lord his goodness towards us in our own experience. So our apostle also witnesseth, Rom. v. 4. where he saith, that 'tri-

bulation bringeth forth patience, and patience experience, and experience hope,' i.e. experience of the Lord his help in troubles, confirmeth and strengtheneth our hope in the Lord. Ye know the saying of David, 1 Sam. xvii. 37, 'The Lord,' said he, 'that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' This should teach us to observe the mercies of the Lord towards us, and not to suffer them to slip out of our mind, and thus to reason with ourselves, as always the Lord hath been good to us, so now he will.

LECTURE XVII.

For Christ is to me both in life and in death advantage.—PHILIP. I. 21.

NOW, then, that the apostle hath signified his hope that Christ should be magnified in his body, and had added, 'whether it were by life or by death,' implying that it was all one to him, so that Christ were magnified in his body, whether it were by life or by death, he yieldeth a reason thereof, saying, 'For Christ is to me,' &c., as if he should have said, I heartily look for and hope that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; and so that Christ be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death, all is one to me, 'for Christ is to me,' &c. i.e. whether I live or die, Christ is to me advantage. If I live, and Christ be magnified in my body by preaching the gospel, and walking in his ways, herein I count I have great gain and advantage; and if I die now in my bands, and Christ be magnified in my body by my constancy in the defence of the gospel, and in suffering for the gospel's sake, herein also I count I have great gain and advantage; so that if Christ be magnified in my body, it is all one to me whether it be by life or by death, because whosoever fall, Christ and his glory is the thing which I count my vantage and gain. His glory by me is my glory; the increase of his kingdom by me is the crown of my rejoicing; the honour of his name by me, whether it be by my life or by my death, is to me in mine account a great gain. Thus, then, I resolve the apostle's reason; Christ and his glory is to me of that reckoning and regard, that whether he be glorified in my life or in my death, I count it a great gain unto me; therefore it is all one to me whether he be glorified in my body by my life or by my death. This sense and meaning of these words I follow, both because, being a reason of the former words, it thus best concludeth them in my judgment, as also because the words themselves in the original may very well carry this meaning, if we understand an ellipsis of the word *xara*, which is not unusual.

Neither is this meaning of these words unsorting with the words that follow. For having said that

Christ and his glory was unto him, and in his account, as well in death as in life, even both in death and in life, an advantago and gain, upon that occasion, by a little digression, he first moveth the doubt whether were better for him to choose life or death, if he should choose the one, ver. 22; and secondly answereth that he knoweth not what to choose, but in this choice is in a strait betwixt two; and thirdly, setteth down the reasons why the choice is so hard, as 1, in respect of himself it were better for him to choose death, ver. 23, and 2, in respect of them it were better that he choose life, ver. 24. Here is then the strait, whether for his own greater good he were now to choose death, or for their greater good he were to choose longer life. This I take to be the order and meaning of these words generally thus far. Now let us see what observations we may gather hence for our farther use and instruction.

The first thing, then, which here I note is, the reason wherefore the apostle was so indifferent either unto life or death, whichever God might be glorified by; and it was because whether he lived or died, if by either death or life he might gain glory unto Christ, unto him did acerue vantage enough. Whence I observe, how a Christian becometh indifferent unto either life or death, and that is thus: if Christ be unto him both in life and in death advantage, if he seek no other gain but this, that Christ may be glorified in his body, then he is indifferent unto whatsoever it is whereby Christ may be glorified, be it life or death. This was it that made those three children mentioned in Daniel so indifferent either unto life or death, Dan. iii. 16-18. For when Nebuchadnezzar had called them, and had thundered out cruel threatenings against them, if they should not worship the golden image that he had set up, they said unto him, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not eareful to answer thee in this matter. Behold, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the hot fiery furnace,' &c. In which their answer they plainly shew that it was not

life or death that they stood upon, but it was the glory of their God. If God should deliver them from death to his farther glory by their life, they were willing to live; and again, if he should deliver them up unto death to his further glory by their death, they were also willing to die. Life and death was indifferent to them, by whethersoever God would be glorified in them, because the glory of God was all that they sought in life or in death. The same is to be said of all those godly martyrs that are dead in the Lord for the testimony of a good conscience, and for the defence of the truth of Christ Jesus to the shedding of their blood. They were willing, no doubt, to have lived, and they were willing also to die, even very indifferent unto either life or death. And how so that they were indifferent unto either? Because, if God were glorified in them, whether it were by life or by death, that was comfort enough, joy enough, and gain enough unto them. If they might gain glory unto God thereby, come death or come life, either was welcome unto them. And in so many of God's children, as there is this indifference unto either life or death, thus it cometh to pass because of the advantage which they reckon upon by God's glory, because, as either life or death makes for God's glory, so they embrace either; life, if thereby God may be more glorified; and death, if thereby God may be more glorified.

Let this, then, teach us, even so many of us as feel not in ourselves this indifference unto either life or death, to look into the cause why it is that we are not indifferent unto either. And surely, if we be not too partially affected towards ourselves, we shall find that it is, because this is the least reckoning with us, that Christ be glorified in our bodies. The pleasures and sorrows of life, and the terrors of death, these be the things that so affect us, that we are not indifferent unto either, but so heart-set on the one, that we cannot brook to hear of the other. 'If,' as Job speaketh, chap. xxi. 8-10, 'our seed be stablished in our sight with us, and our generation before our eyes; if our houses be peaceable without fear, and the rod of God be not upon us; if our bullocks gender and fail not, and our ewe calve, and cast not her calf;' if we spend our days in wealth, and have all things at our desire, then do we so doat upon these things, that we say with the fool in the gospel, Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years; live at ease, eat, drink, and take thy pastime.' And such a reckoning we make upon the honours, and pleasures, and commodities of this life, that we could be content to live with them ever, but cannot abide to depart from them. Again, if the rod of the Lord be upon us, and his countenance seem to be turned away from us; if we be troubled on every side with fightings without, and terrors within; if we be crossed in our substance and goods, in our wife and children, or in our own bodies; if we be in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or other adversity; if we be tried by mock-

ings and scornings, by bonds and imprisonment: then, on the other side, we are so daunted with those things, that we are weary of our lives, and with Job, in his extremity, chap. iii. 11, 12, vi. 9, vii. 15, we cry out and say, 'Why died I not in the womb? why did the knees prevent me? and why did I suck the breast? Oh that God would destroy me; that he would let his hand go and cut me off! My soul chooseth rather to be strangled, and to die, than to be in my bones.' Yea, and many times like unto Ahithophel and Judas, we become our own butchers. One sort can hear of nothing but life, and another sort wish nothing but death; very few of us that are indifferently affected to either life or death, and all because we mind earthly things. The preferments, and pleasures, and commodities of this life, they are our advantage and gain. If our desires be filled with them, then we are nothing indifferent unto death, but all our delight is set on life. But if we lack them, and instead thereof have our drink mingled with weeping, then are we nothing indifferent unto life, but all our desire is of death, and would God we were dead! would God we were dead! As for the glory of God, it never comes into our thoughts, neither do we ever make account of life, or of death, as they do make for the glory of the Lord; for if we did, then would we be indifferent unto either, as either should make for the glory of the Lord, and not run upon the one as carnal respects, or terrors of death should move us.

Well, now that we know these things, let us think of these things. Let us not set our hearts on life for the love of any earthly thing whatsoever, neither let us wish death for anything of this life which we want, or for any cross of this life which we suffer; but let us be indifferent unto either, as either may make for the glory of Christ Jesus. Let the glory of Christ Jesus be all the vantage and gain that we make reckoning upon either in life or in death, and let it be such a vantage and gain unto us if he be glorified in us, that we make no reckoning of it, whether it be by our life or by our death, so that he be glorified in us. Let his glory be our glory, his kingdom our kingdom, and so let life or death be welcome unto us, as thereby glory is gained unto Christ Jesus. Let us set this down with ourselves, to glorify Christ Jesus in our mortal bodies, and let us not care whether it be by life or by death, and that upon this reckoning, that 'Christ is unto us, in life and death, advantage.'

Now, to descend unto the particulars, the second thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith, that 'Christ is unto him in life advantage.' Whereby he meaneth, that if he live, and through life glorify God in his body by preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus, and walking in his ways, even this glorifying of Christ in his body by his life is unto him advantage, even such an advantage as that this only he counteth his

life, if he glorify God in this life. Whence I observe, what unto a Christian should be the greatest gain of his life, which he should seek, and wherunto he should bend himself in his whole life, and that is the glory of Christ Jesus by a faithful walking in the ways of his calling; and by providing for things honest before the Lord, and before all men. The glorifying of Christ in his body by living to his glory, should seem such a gain unto him, as that all other things in his life should seem but loss unto him. Whereupon it is that the prophets so often remember us that we were created, formed, and made for the Lord his glory, Isa. xliii. 7; that our blessed Saviour exhorteth us, saying, Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,' &c.; that our holy apostle likewise exhorteth us, saying, 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Which places shew plainly thus much, that the thing which we are to seek, and wherunto we are to bend ourselves in our whole life, is the glory of God, even that he may be glorified in our mortal bodies. And the reasons are clear: for, first, the end wherefore we were created and made was, as even now we heard out of the prophet, the glory of God, that he might shew his glory in us, and that we again might glorify him in the land of the living; secondly, we are not our own, but we are bought for a price, and, therefore, as the apostle maketh the argument, 1 Cor. vi. 20, we must glorify God, even him whose we are, in our bodies and in our spirits; henceforth we must not live unto ourselves, but unto him and his glory, 'that died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.' God's glory, that must be the bent of our whole life, and the vantage that we must seek while we are at home in the body.

Now, if ye ask how we are to glorify God in our life, I answer, by walking faithfully in the ways of our calling, whatsoever our calling be; by keeping our vessels holy unto the Lord, and pure from all filthiness of corruption; by conforming our wills in all obedience unto his will, and by living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. All which our apostle comprehendeth in a 'conversation which becometh the gospel of Christ'; and Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 12, in an honest conversation, where he saith, 'Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you, as of evildoers, may by your good works (which they shall see) glorify God in the day of visitation.' That God may be glorified by us, this is a point which we must look unto. And how may this be? By having our conversation honest; that is, by so walking and living, as before was mentioned.

This, then, should teach us so to look unto our ways in our whole life, that in nothing the Lord be dishonoured by us. For, if the glory of God should be unto us the greatest gain of our life, while we live

here in the body, then should we in all things seek it, and by no means do anything which may be to the impairing of it. But do we, in our whole life, seek the glory of our God as our greatest gain? Do we in nothing dishonour our God throughout our whole life? If every man should but look how faithfully he walketh in the ways of his calling, the minister, the lawyer, the physician, the soldier, the tradesman, the merchant, the countryman, how careful each of them in their calling are, that God may be glorified by them; if every man shall but look how watchful he is over his own body, that it be not defiled with the corruptions which are in the world through lust, what a conscience he maketh of all his ways, that they be framed in all obedience unto God's will, and how desirous he is to lead a sober, a righteous, and a godly life in this present world; if, I say, every man shall but look into himself, and search, and see how the case standeth with him touching each of these things, each man shall find in himself so many things whereby God is dishonoured, as that I need not to press them, to the shame of all that hear them. Beloved, the thing is too lamentable, and too true, if we will confess a truth, that whom in our whole life by all means we should glorify, against him our whole life is a continual rebellion. For what sin is it whereof, if we duly examine ourselves, we may not find ourselves guilty? Look unto the first table. Do we not trust unto uncertain riches, and give much honour to others which is due unto God alone, and so make other gods unto ourselves besides him? Do not many in the worship of God use superstitious rites, and will-worships, which God never commanded, and so sin against the second commandment? Do we not often abuse the name of God in perjuries, in blasphemous oaths, in speaking of him lightly and unreverently, and so take his name in vain? Do we not profane the holy Sabbath, many of us, with bodily labour on that day, many with riotous banqueting on that day, many with unlawful gaming on that day, and most of us with neglect of such holy duties as on that day were to be performed? Look also unto the second table. Do we not neglect, nay, contemn, our superiors, and sometimes even make rebellion against them? Do we not often murder the innocent without a cause, if not in his life, yet in his credit and name, and in a cruel spite against him? Do we not often steal from our brethren, by false weights and measures, by selling naughty wares, by bribes and extortion, by simony and usury, by deceitful and wrongful dealing? Do we not often lie one unto another, and so smother the truth that it can never come to light? Do we not abound with sinful lusts, inordinate affections, ungodly desires, and unruly motions? True it is which the prophet saith, Hos. iv. 2, that 'by lying, and swearing, and killing, and stealing, and whoring, we break out, and blood toucheth blood.' Shall I say all in a word? Christ is not to us in life advantage, but

rather Christ is unto us in life a loss. His glory we count not our glory, but rather we count all the time lost that is not spent in the things which tend nothing to his glory. I wish my words might justly be reprobred. Beloved, it is enough that we have spent the time past of our life in ungodliness and unrighteousness, it is enough that hitherto we have not glorified God in our mortal bodies as we ought. Let us hereafter make straight steps unto the Lord, and let us live unto his glory, in whose glory is our life. Let us so make account that we live, if we live to his glory; and, whatsoever others count their gain, let us count his glory our greatest gain.

The third thing which here I notice is, that the apostle saith, that Christ is unto him in death advantage; whereby he meaneth, that if he die, and by his constancy in his death bring glory unto Christ, this glorifying of Christ by his death is unto him in his death an advantage. Whence I observe, what unto a Christian should be the thing whereof he should make reckoning in his death, and that is, that God be glorified by his death; and then if he die, so that in his death God have his glory, welcome death whensoever and whatsoever, violent or natural. What saith our blessed Saviour? Luke xii. 50, 'I must,' saith he, 'be baptized with a baptism, and how am I grieved till it be ended!' In which words he shewed his great and earnest desire to die for us, that the gospel might the sooner be preached throughout the world. For, having before signified that his coming was to preach the gospel, which should kindle a fire throughout the world, and this fire was already kindled by the preaching of the gospel, he signified likewise that before his passion the gospel should not be published throughout the world. And therefore, that he desired to die was, that the gospel might the sooner be preached throughout the world. Here, then, ye see what it was that the Son of God reckoned upon his death, namely, the glory of God by the publishing of the gospel throughout the world. And, because he longed after this, he longed after death. What also saith our holy apostle? Philip. ii. 17, 'Though,' saith he, 'I be offered up upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad, and rejoice with you all.' Where ye see the apostle saith, that he would rejoice in death as a vantage unto him, if by his death God might have his glory, that their faith thereby might be confirmed. The thing, then, that he made reckoning of in his death was, that God might be glorified thereby, and so he would rejoice in death. Semblably, we in death should principally look at this, that our death be to the glory of the Lord, that our death be as the death of his saints, that our death be in the Lord, and then we may rejoice and be glad in it. For as the prophet saith, Ps. cxvi. 18, 'Right dear and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of the saints.' And, as our Saviour saith, Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.'

Hence, then, we may learn, why it is that we are many of us so unwilling to die. If persecution arise because of the word, and fire and faggot be the portion for us to drink, it is no need to bid us to fly, but we run, and we turn, and turn, and turn again, rather than we will burn. If any sickness seize upon us, by and we so shrink, and are so afraid of death, that whatsoever physic by the physician, whatsoever comfort by the minister be ministered unto us, yet still nothing but death, death with us. Every summon of death is so fearful unto us, that if any way we could we would shift it off. And why is all this, but because we count of no vantage in death, because Christ is not unto us advantage in death? We never bethink ourselves, Shall God be glorified by my death? Shall the saints' hearts be strengthened by my constancy, and my patience in my death? Shall the Christian and quiet repose of my soul in the Lord at my death, cause them that behold me to glorify the Lord? But what do we think and say? I shall die, I shall die, I shall go down to the grave, and be no more seen; the terrors of death are upon me, and who shall deliver me? And thus death triumpheth over us, whereas upon the other cogitations, we should triumph over death. Ye know the story of Nabal, of whom it is said, that when his wife told him David's words, his heart died within him, and he was like a stone, 1 Sam. xxv. 37. So is it with many of us; when any summons of death come forth for us, our hearts fail and die within us, and we are even as stones. And no marvel that fear of death should so work upon us, when in our death there is nothing to comfort us. If our hearts were so set on the glory of the Lord, that we counted that gain enough unto us, if any way we might gain glory unto the Lord by life, or by death, then would we willingly die, whensoever our death might be to God's glory. But setting apart all care of God's glory by life or by death, we mind only the pleasures and profits of this life, which have an end in death, and therefore are unwilling to die. In the terrors of death, then will we not fear death? Let me die the death of the righteous, and I will not fear what death can do unto me. Let Christ Jesus be glorified by my death, and then let death come in fire, in sword, in famine, in pestilence, in what terrible sort it can come, and I will triumph over death. Let this mind be in every one of us, and so, that by our death God be glorified in us, at what time soever, and in what sort soever it come, let it be welcome to us. And let this suffice to be observed from these words; whence ye see, first, how we become indifferent unto either death or life, namely, if Christ be unto us both in life and in death advantage; secondly, that the vantage whereof we are to make reckoning in our life is, that Christ Jesus may be glorified by our life; and thirdly, that the vantage whereof we are to make reckoning in our death is, that Christ Jesus may be glorified by our death.

Now, upon this occasion that he had said that he was very indifferent unto either life or death, because Christ was unto him both in life and in death advantage, the apostle maketh a little digression, and disputeth the point whether were better for him to choose life or death. And first, in this verse he moveth the doubt, and answereth it in these words, 'And whether,' &c. Which words, I know, are diversely read; but the words bearing well this reading, I follow it, as both best opening the apostle's meaning, and best sorting with that which followeth. Now, when he saith, 'Whether to live in the flesh,' ye must understand that to live *in* the flesh, and to live *after* the flesh are much different. For to live after the flesh, is to follow the filthy lusts of the flesh, and to live in the flesh, is only to live in this frail body. The doubt then is, whether to live in the body were profitable for him, and what to choose, life or death, were best for him. And the answer is, that he knoweth not what to choose, life or death. Being, in his case, in prison, a man would have thought this choice would not have been hard; yet, he being in prison, saw such comfort in death, and such joy in life, that he knew not which rather to choose. And such love did he bear towards the Philippians, that weighing the great comfort which he should have by his death, with the great profit which they should have by his life, he knew not what to choose.

Whence I observe, first, the great love which ought to be in the pastor towards his people, and the great desire which he ought to have of their profit and comfort. Even in case of his greatest comfort, joined with their loss and heaviness, it should much perplex him what to choose, his or their present comfort. Ye know that of Moses, Exod. xxxii. 32, where he prayeth the Lord either to pardon his people their sins, or to raze him out of the book of life. And that of Paul, Rom. ix. 3, where he wished himself to be separated from Christ for his brethren, which were his kinsmen according to the flesh. They both knew, the one, that he could not be razed out of the book of life, and the other, that he could not be separated from Christ, only therein they shewed how greatly God's glory [is] in the people's good. And true is that of the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, that love 'seeks not her own things, but the things of others.' Whence yet I do not infer, that the pastor, for love of his people, should, in case of his salvation, wish his own

utter rection,* rather than that his people should not be gained unto Christ. But this, I say, that even in case of his and their salvation, for the love of his people, he is to be perplexed how soon to wish his salvation by his dissolution, because however his present comfort should be gained by his present dissolution, yet their salvation should be furthered by his longer continuance in the body.

A point which doth not much perplex many pastors. For too many such there are, as neither caring for their own salvation, nor their people's, look only to fleece them, but never care what become of them. A point which might be much enlarged, but not so fitly in this place. If the urging of it might concern any here, I beseech them, in the fear of God, to think further of it with themselves.

The second thing which here I observe is this, that if we be at peace with God, and keep faith, and a good conscience, whatsoever our outward state be, we have such comfort and joy on every hand, that neither we desire to die in respect of the griefs of this life, nor to live in respect of any fear of death. The example of our apostle is proof enough to this purpose. He lay in prison, and of the brethren none assisted him, but all forsook him; and many practised much against his constancy, and against his life, so that his outward state was very hard, and such that, in respect of the griefs of his life, he might have desired death; and again, in respect of the fear of death, he might have desired life. Yet even then such joy and comfort he found on every side, which way soever he looked, to life or death, that he knew not whether of them to choose. And where was the reason? Though his ease was hard, yet he was at peace with God, and had faith, and a good conscience.

Far otherwise it is with many in our day, who see nothing but matter of discontentment and discomfort, both in life and in death. If either promotion fall not upon them according to their desire, or if crosses fall upon them otherwise than they desire, then they grew malcontented, they care not to live, and yet they joy not in death. Such are they that mind earthly things, but mind not the things of God.

Let us seek to be at peace with God; let us trust perfectly in Christ Jesus; let us keep a good conscience in all things, and this shall make both life and death comfortable unto us.

* Qu. 'rejection'?—ED.

LECTURE XVIII.*

And whether to live in the flesh were profitable for me, and what to choose, I know not.—PHILIP. I. 22.

NOW upon this occasion that he had said, that he was very indifferent unto either life or death,

because Christ was unto him both in life and in death advantage, the apostle maketh a little digression, and

* It will be noticed that several paragraphs at the beginning of this lecture are a simple repetition of those at the close of the preceding.—ED.

disputeth the point whether were better for him to choose, life or death. And first, in this verse he moveth the doubt, and also answereth it in these words, ‘And whether,’ &c. And secondly, he bringeth reasons for either part, first, that in respect of himself it were better for him to choose death, verse 23; secondly, that in respect of the Philippians, it were better that he choose life, verse 24. So that the strait was hard, whether for his own greater good he were now to choose death, or for their greater good he were to choose longer life. The words where the doubt is moved are diversely read, but they bearing well this reading, I follow it, as both best opening the apostle’s meaning, and best sorting with that which followeth. The doubt is, whether to live in the flesh or in the body were profitable for him; and what to choose, life or death, but was in a wonderful strait between the two. Being in his ease, in prison, a man would have thought this choice would not have been hard. Yet he, being in prison, saw such comfort in death, and such joy in life, that he knew not which rather to choose. And again, such a love he did bear towards the Philippians, that, weighing the great comfort which he should have by his death with the great profit which they should have by his life, he knew not what to choose—that which should be to his greater comfort, or that which should be to their greater profit.

Whence, first, I observe the great love which ought to be in the pastor towards his people, and the great desire which he ought to have of their profit and comfort. Even in case of his greatest comfort joined with their loss and heaviness, it should much perplex him what to choose, his or their present comfort and good. Ye know that of Moses, Exod. xxxii. 32, where he prayed the Lord either to pardon the people that had sinned, or to raze him out of the book of life; and that of Paul, Rom. ix. 3, where he wished himself to be separated from Christ, for his brethren, which were his kinsmen according to the flesh. They both knew, the one that he could not be razed out of the book of life, and the other that he could not be separated from Christ; but therein they shewed abundantly how greatly they loved their people, and desired their salvation. Neither yet do I here teach that the pastor, for love of his people, should, in case of his salvation, wish his own utter rejection rather than that his people should not be gained unto Christ. But this I say, that even in case of his salvation and theirs, for the love of his people, he should oftentimes be perplexed how soon to wish his salvation by his dissolution; because, howsoever his present comfort might be gained by his present dissolution, yet their salvation may be furthered by his longer continuance in the body.

A point which doth not overmuch perplex many pastors in our day; for too many such there are as, neither caring for their own salvation nor for their

people’s, look only to fleece them, but never care else what become of them. Which point might be much enlarged, if the place were convenient. If the pressing of it might concern any here, I beseech them, in the fear of the Lord, to think farther of it with themselves.

The second thing whieh hence I observe is this, that if we be at peace with God, and keep faith and a good conscience, whatsoever our outward state be, we have such comfort and joy on every side, that neither we desire to die in respect of the griefs of this life, nor yet to live in respect of any fear of death. The example of our apostle is proof enough to this purpose: he lay in prison for the defence of the gospel, wherein none of the brethren assisted him, but all forsook him, and many practised much against his conscience and against his life; so that his untoward state was very hard, and such that in respect of the griefs of his life he might have desired death; and again, in respect of the fear of death, he might have desired life. Yet even then, which way soever he looked, to life or death, such joy and comfort he saw in both, as that neither the griefs of life made him to wish death, nor the fear of death made him to wish life. And where was the reason? Though his ease many ways were hard, yet was he at peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord; he was strong in the faith of Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, and he had the testimony of a good conscience, that in all simplicity and godly pureness, he had his conversation in the world. And therefore neither for the grief of life, nor for the fear of death, wished he the one or the other, but as either might make more for God’s glory he was indifferent unto either.

Far otherwise it is with many in our day, who see nothing but matter of discontentment and discomfort both in life and in death; for so it is with many of us, that if either promotion fall not upon us according to our desire, or if crosses fall upon us otherwise than we desire, then we grow malcontented, we take no joy in our life, and sometimes we hasten our own death. And again, many of us, if any way we be summoned unto death, by sickness, by the sword, by the pestilence, or any other way, so we shrug and shrink for fear of death, that like unto Nabal, if we surmise any danger of death, by and by our hearts faint and ‘die within us, and we become like stones,’ 1 Sam. xxv. 37. No comfort or contentment a great many of us find either in death or in life, but what through grief of the one and fear of the other, we are often out of love with the one and with the other. And the reason is plain, for it is because we are not at peace with God, nor have the mystery of faith in a good conscience. We feel no comfort in our God through our reconciliation by Jesus Christ, we want a sound and a lively faith, whereby we should take hold of the promises of God made in Christ Jesus,

and a bad conscience so troubles us, that all is disquieted within us. And therefore we find no comfort or contentment in life or in death, but discomfort and discontentment in both.

Will we then find comfort and contentment in both, whatsoever our state outwardly be? Let us labour to be at peace with God; let us trust perfectly in Christ Jesus, and let us keep a good conscience in all things, and this shall make both life and death comfortable unto us; whatsoever our outward estate be, both life and death shall be comfortable unto us, if we have peace with God, and faith, and a good conscience. And let this suffice to be observed from the doubt which the apostle moveth, where he professeth that he knows not what to choose, life or death.

And why knew he not what to choose, life or death? The reason hereof in the words following is said to be, because on both sides there were such reasons, on the one side to choose life, and on the other side to choose death, that he was in a wonderful strait on both sides. For, saith he, I am greatly in doubt, or I am in a wonderful strait on both sides: on the one side desiring to be loosed from the prison of this body, or to depart out of the earthly house of this tabernacle, for so the word *ἀναζητεῖσθαι* may be taken actively or passively, and 'to be with Christ, where he sitteth at the right hand of God, which (saith he) is best of all,' viz., 'for me'; nevertheless, on the other side, knowing that for me to abide in the flesh, and to live longer in the body, is more needful for you, that ye may enjoy the fruit of my ministry. The former reason concerneth himself, and his own good; the latter concerneth the Philippians, and their good. In the former is signified his great desire to remove out of the body, and to dwell with the Lord; in the latter is signified his great desire to abide in the body for their furtherance, and joy of their faith. Unto the former his love toward Christ constrained him, unto the latter his love toward them constrained him. For the former it was best for him, for the latter it was most needful for them. And thus between the former and the latter he was so perplexed, that he knew not what to choose, life or death; death for his own present good, or life for their further good.

Now the thing which in the former reason I note is, that the apostle desired even with a great desire to be loosed from the prison of his body, or to depart out of the body, and to be with Christ, where he sitteth at the right hand of the throne of God, and that he counted this better for him in respect of himself, than to live in the body. Whence I observe, that a Christian, in respect of himself, is rather to desire to die than to live, to depart out of the body, than to abide in the body. Unto the proof of this point out of this place, add also that other of our apostle, 2 Cor. v. 8, where to the same purpose, and in the same words almost, he saith thus, 'We love rather to remove out of the body, and to dwell with the Lord.' And that

good old Simeon ye know, when once he had seen the Messias which was promised, then he desired with all his heart to die, saying, Luke ii. 29, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;' as if he should have said, Now that I have seen the promised Messias, the sweet Saviour of the world, now indeed I desire rather to die than to live. Yea, but was it not a great fault in Job that he desired rather to die than to live, when in the bitterness of his soul he cried and said, Job iii. 11, vi. 9, vii. 15, 'Why died I not in my birth? or why died I not when I came out of the womb? Oh that God would destroy me; that he would let his hand go and cut me off. My soul chooseth rather to be strangled and to die, than to be in my bones.' Yes, indeed, this was a great fault in Job thus impatiently to break out, and to search for death more than for treasures. Neither is any man, be his crosses or troubles never so great, never so many, through impatience, and because he is weary of his life, to wish rather to die than to live; much less is he, with cursed Ahithophel or traitorous Judas, to become his own butcher, and to cut off his own days; for this were to repine against the Highest, and to take our own matters out of God's into our own hands. A Christian, therefore, in respect of himself, is to desire rather to die than to live, but in no sort through impatience, or because he is weary of his life. Yea, but is not death terrible even unto the godly, and do they not oftentimes so shrink thereat that they are afraid of it? Yes, surely, death in itself, and in its own nature, is so terrible, that David being in great heaviness and distress by reason of Saul's cruelty, expressed it thus saying, Ps. lv. 5, 'The terrors of death are fallen upon me;' whereby he meaneth that he was so afraid of his enemies, as if death had been ready to seize upon him. And surely, but for Christ Jesus, that he hath seasoned it, and that through him it is but a passage unto a better life, we might all of us, even the best of us, well fear death, as the fruit of sin, and as the reward or wages of sin.

How then do we say, that a Christian in respect of himself, is to desire rather to die than to live? We must understand that a Christian is to desire rather to die than to live. But how? Not simply rather to die than to live, but so as Paul did, rather to die and to be with Christ than to live. He doth not say to die, and to be rid out of the miseries of this life; for so many desire, whose desire is not good, and for whom it were better rather to live in the body than to die; but he saith, 'to die, and to be with Christ.' Are we not then, while we live here in the body, with Christ, and Christ with us? If we will speak as the Scripture usually doth, we are not. While we live here in the body, we are in Christ by his Spirit, and Christ in us by faith, as appeareth by many places of holy Scripture; but, in the usual phrase of the Scripture, then principally we are said to be with Christ, when,

after the separation of the soul from the body, we do in soul enjoy the continual presence of Christ in heaven, where he sitteth at the right hand of the throne of God; even as the apostle witnesseth, where he saith, 2 Cor. v. 6, 'Whiles we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord,' not from being in the Lord, but from dwelling with the Lord in the heavenly places. So that, first, our earthly house of this tabernacle must be destroyed before we can be with Christ, where he is as he is man. When, then, we say that a Christian, in respect of himself, is to desire rather to die than to live, the meaning is, that he is rather to desire the separation of his soul from his body, and in soul to be with Christ, where he is as man, till he may, both in soul and body, be there with him for ever, than to live in the body.

And the reasons are plain and clear: as, first, because Christ is the husband, and we the spouse, if we belong unto Christ, Eph. v. 32. As, then, it is better for the spouse to live with her husband than to live apart from her husband, so is it better for us to be loosed and to be with Christ, than to live in the body. Secondly, because heaven is our home, and here we are but pilgrims and strangers, Heb. xi. 13. As, then, it is better to be at home than where we are but pilgrims and strangers, so is it better for us to be loosed and to be with Christ, than to live in the body. Thirdly, because it is better for the soul to be joined unto Christ than unto a sinful body; for, as David saith of Meshech, and of the tents of Kedar, Ps. cxx. 5, 'Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell in Meshech, and to have mine habitation among the tents of Kedar,' so may the soul say of the body, 'Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell in this sinful body; better it were for me to be joined unto Christ. Fourthly, because the body is as a prison of the soul, wherein it wanteth free liberty to do what it would and should. As, then, it is better to be out of prison, and to live at liberty, so is it better to die, and to be with Christ, than to live in the body. Fifthly, because in the body we only know in part, believe in part, love in part, live in part, joy in part, and are blessed in part, with all such graces of the Spirit; but when we remove out of the body, then that which is in part shall be abolished. As, then, it is better to know, to love, to live, to joy, &c., perfectly, than only but in part, so is it better to be loosed, and to be with Christ, where all these shall be perfected, than to live in the body, where they are never but in part. Lastly, to pass over the rest in silence, because it is better to be with God than with men, in heaven than in earth, in a state freed from sorrow, sin, and temptation, than in a state subject to them all; for 'man that is born of a woman is but of short continuance, and full of trouble,' as Job speaketh, Job xiv. 1; yea, his life is as a warfare, as the same Job speaketh, vii. 1, and as our Saviour speaketh, Mat. vi. 34, every day of his life bringeth grief enough with it, neither hath his grief an end till

his life have an end. But 'blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them,' Rev. xiv. 13. They rest from their labours, inasmuch as all tears are wiped from their eyes; no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, doth take hold of them; and their works follow them, inasmuch as they are had in remembrance before God, when all other things of our life leave us and forsake us. I spare to enlarge this point further at this time. Ye may easily conceive what might be added.

Let this serve for a just reproof of them that are unwilling to die. For come now, and let us reason the case together. What man is there among you, that, if he were clothed only with ragged, and torn, and patched, and worn, and bad clothes, would not be willing to be unclothed of them, and to be clothed with better? And what else is this mortal and corruptible body, but as ragged and rotten clothes wherein we are clothed? Why should we not, then, be willing to be shifted of those clothes, of this mortal and corruptible body, and to be clothed with our house which is from heaven, even with incorruption and immortality? Again, what man is there among you, that, if he were in prison, would not be willing to be set at liberty? or being in a place where he is but a stranger, would not be willing to be at home? And what else is this sinful body, but as a prison of the soul, wherein it is so shut, that it hath no liberty till it return unto him that gave it? Or what else is this world, but as a place wherein we wander as pilgrims, and have no abiding city? Why should we not then be willing to remove out of this prison of the body, and to be received into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? or to loose anchor from this land, wherein we are but strangers, and by death to sail towards heaven, where is our home and our abiding city? Where should the members joy to be but with their head? where should the spouse desire to be but with her husband? where should man, whose breath is in his nostrils, delight to be, but with him that is his life, to see him as he is, and to live in his continual presence? Surely, whosoever thou art that art unwilling to die, thou dost not yet conceive nor believe the blessed estate of them that die in the Lord; thou hast not yet thoroughly learned this lesson, that Christ is the husband of the church, that Christ is the life of his body, that in the presence of Christ there is fulness of joy and life for evermore; for then wouldest thou willingly desire with the apostle to be loosed, and to be with Christ, which is far the best. If the condition of the children of men, and the condition of beasts, were even as one condition unto them, so that in their death there were indeed no difference, or if after death there remained nothing but fearful expectation of judgment, then indeed thou hadst some reason to be unwilling to die. But now that Christ by death hath triumphed over death, and made death unto thee

(if thou belong unto him) a passage unto life without death, unto joy without sorrow, unto all blessedness without any misery, why shouldst thou be unwilling to die? Nay, now a chip for death! nay, now most welcome death! And so, beloved, let it be to every one of us; if we belong unto Christ, there is no cause

why we should fear death, and great cause there is why we should embrace death. Let us therefore never fear death, nor be unwilling to die, but whensoever the Lord his will is, let us be willing to be loosed, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.

LECTURE XIX.

Desiring to be loosed, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.—PHILIP. I. 23.

NOW to proceed. Against this which hath been said, it may be objected, that as no man is to put asunder the things which God hath coupled together, as the soul and the body, so no man is to desire that the things which God hath coupled be sundered, and therefore no Christian is to desire to die. Whereunto I answer, that it is true that no Christian is to desire simply to die, nor to die to this end only that he may be rid of the miseries of this life, nor to die otherwise than when the Lord his will is; but yet he may desire to die and to be with Christ, to die to this end, that he may be with Christ, to die when the Lord his will is, and when his death may be for his glory. So it is to be understood of Elias, 1 Kings xix. 4, that he desired to die when he prayed and said, ‘It is enough: O Lord, take my soul; for I am no better than my fathers.’ And so we say that a Christian may desire to die when the Lord his will is, not for that death in itself is to be desired, but because he desireth to be with Christ. So that the thing which a Christian desireth simply and in itself is to be with Christ, neither doth he otherwise desire to be loosed but that he may be with Christ; and so we say he may desire to be loosed when the Lord his will is. And thus much for this, which is the chief point in these words; whence ye see that a Christian in respect of himself may desire rather to die than to live.

Other things there are which may not unfruitfully be noted in these words, which I will only briefly touch, because they are things not principally intended. The apostle desireth to be loosed and to be with Christ. To be loosed; why? That he might be with Christ. Whence I observe, that the death of God’s saints is nothing else but a departure of the soul out of the body unto heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the throne of God. He which at the first coupled soul and body together, in death parteth them asunder, and taketh the soul unto himself, to be where he is, till in the resurrection he couple them again together, never after to be parted asunder. Whereof all the godly in Christ Jesus at all times have been so thoroughly persuaded, that always in death they have done and do (after the example of Christ Jesus) commend their souls into the hands of him that gave them, saying as he did, Luke xxiii. 46,

‘Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.’ So we read that that holy martyr Stephen, when he was stoned, called on God and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,’ Acts vii. 59. And in death it is the very ordinary prayer of all God’s saints; wherein they plainly shew their thorough persuasion that in death their souls are received by the Father of spirits into the heavenly habitations, there to be joined unto Christ Jesus. Contrariwise, the death of the wicked and ungodly of the earth is nothing else but a departure of the soul out of the body unto hell, there to be with the devil and his angels. Examples of both we have in the beggar and the rich man, Luke xvi. 22, whose deaths, unto the one was the departure of his soul out of his body into heaven, but unto the other the departure of his soul out of his body into hell. Or if the persons of these prove not strongly enough, take, for example, the death of the two thieves which were hanged with our blessed Saviour on the cross, unto the one of which Jesus said, that that day he should be with him in paradise, but unto the other that railed on him, his death doubtless was a downfall into hell, Luke xxiii. 43.

Is, then, the dissolution of God’s saints a passage of the soul out of the body unto heaven, there to be with Christ? Far be it, then, from us to think that the condition of the children of men and the condition of beasts is even as one condition unto them; that when man dieth he returneth wholly unto the dust, and hath no more fruit of all the travails that he hath taken under the sun. Thus, indeed, sensual man, following only the judgment of his weak sense, and of his own blind reason, thinketh and saith, As the one dieth, so dieth the other; man and beast have all one breath, and in death there is no excellency of man above the beast; all go to one place, all to the earth, as all came from the earth. But the Spirit of God hath otherwise taught us in his holy word, for doth not the Lord say, Mat. xxi. 32, that he is ‘the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob’? And doth he not say that ‘he is not the God of the dead, but of the living’? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then, are not dead, but living. Living? How? In their souls with God. Dead they are in respect of the separation of their souls from their bodies. But forasmuch as the earthly house of their tabernacle being destroyed,

they have a building given of God, that is, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, as the apostle witnesseth even of all the saints of God, 2 Cor. v. 1; therefore they are still living in their souls with God, in their heavenly habitations. Howsoever, then, the bodies of men be mortal, and in death go down unto the dust whence first they came, yet their souls are immortal, and in death return unto the Father of spirits, whence they came. But what needs more to this purpose than that which here our apostle saith? In death, the sons of men are loosed; that is, their souls are separated from their bodies. Now, if the soul were mortal as the body, what needed any loosing of the one from the other? Surely both should fall together, and not the one be loosed from the other, if the condition of both were one. Even this, then, that the souls in death are loosed from the bodies of men sheweth that the souls are immortal. Again, in death the saints of God are loosed that they may be with Christ; after death, then, they are with Christ, not in the body, for that descendeth unto the grave, there to rest until the resurrection. In soul then. In death, then, the souls of God's saints pass out of the body unto heaven, there to be with Christ. And, therefore, far be it from us to think that in death, as of beast, so of man there is utterly an end, and an entire return unto the dust.

And yet so we live, a great many of us, as if we made no other reckoning; for do we not, a great many of us, pass our dwelling here without fear, in chambering and wantonness, in gluttony and drunkenness, in strife and envy? Do we not even glut ourselves with sporting and pleasure, and sundry delights of the flesh, and say, Let us be merry, and take our fills of pleasure while we are here? for when we are gone, then all the world is gone with us. Surely, if a man may conjecture by our dissoluteness of life, a great many of us either think that in death there is utterly an end of us, or too little think what remaineth after death. Beloved, we are 'bought with a price; let us therefore glorify God, both in our bodies and in our spirits.' We may not live unto ourselves, nor give our members weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, but we must live unto him that died for us and rose again, and give our members servants unto righteousness in holiness. Let us so live that in our lives we think of death, and let us know that if we die the death of the saints, we shall die to live for ever with Christ; but if otherwise, our part shall be in that lake that ever burneth.

Again, this may serve for the confutation of that foolish dream of purgatory. The souls of God's saints they are loosed in death from the body, and being loosed are with Christ; the souls of the wicked, they likewise in death are loosed from the body, and being loosed, do, as it is said of Judas, Acts i. 25, go to their 'own place,' even the place of the damned. Where, then, is purgatory? They that trouble the church with this fancy, tell us that, of them that die,

some are perfect and just men, and they go straight unto heaven; others are desperately wicked, and they go straight down into hell; and others are neither perfectly good nor thoroughly bad, and for these are purgatory. But I demand them, touching this third sort of men, have they faith or no? They grant they have but a weak faith, not a perfect faith. If they have faith, if it be a true and lively faith, though it be but a weak faith, by it they are saved, and in death received unto glory. 'He that believeth' (saith our Saviour Christ) 'hath eternal life,' John iii. 15. He that believeth; what? He that hath such a measure of faith, he that hath such a degree of perfection of faith? No; but he that believeth truly, though weakly and imperfectly, he hath eternal life; even living in the body, he hath eternal life in hope, and when he removeth out of the body, shall have it in possession; hath it now in the beginning, and then shall have it in a greater fruition. Again, I demand, touching this third sort of men, where doth the apostle ever exempt himself from the number of imperfect men? where doth he ever count himself perfect? Nay, in this epistle he plainly denieth it, Phil. iii. 12; and both there, and often elsewhere, signifieth his endeavouring and contending after perfection. And yet, being loosed, he speaketh not of going into purgatory, but of being with Christ. Thus, then, we teach, that all that die, die either in the faith of Christ, and so be with Christ, or else die not in the faith of Christ, and so they go to their place with Judas. As for any third place, it is a devised dream, and clearly confuted by the Scriptures. The sum of all this is, the souls of God's saints, being loosed from the body, are with Christ; therefore we are neither to think that, when man dieth, he wholly returneth to the dust, nor yet that he goeth unto purgatory.

Another thing yet farther here I note, which is, that the apostle desired to be with Christ. Where I observe that, till man be loosed from the earthly house of this tabernacle, and be in heaven, he is not with Christ. To which purpose, also, is that of our apostle, where he saith, 2 Cor. v. 6, that 'whiles we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' While we live, then, here in the body, we are absent from the Lord. First, then, we must remove out of the body before we can be with the Lord; with the Lord, I say, in corporal presence. For otherwise, touching his spiritual presence, we know that he hath said unto us, Mat. xxviii. 20, 'I am with you always until the end of the world.' But touching his corporal presence, he hath said, John xii. 8, 'The poor always ye have with you, but me ye shall not have always.'

This, then, serveth for the confutation of the corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord his supper. A certain truth it is, that Christ is truly and really present in the sacrament of the Lord his supper, and that so many as come unto that holy supper, having on their wedding garment, and having

duly examined themselves touching their faith towards God, their repentance for their sins, and their love of God and of their brethren, do there truly and really eat the body and drink the blood of Christ Jesus. For there spiritually we eat the body and drink the blood of Christ Jesus, thereto spiritually Christ is given unto us, and taken of us to be one with us and we with him; spiritually, I say, and therefore truly and really. And therefore, when we come unto that holy table, to be made partakers of those great and high mysteries of Christ, his blessed death and passion, we must know that the ground is holy whereon we stand, we must know that we are present before the Lord, so that accordingly we must prepare ourselves to the reverend receiving of those holy mysteries; which, in this place at this time, I add, because it is likely that many here present purpose to-morrow to communicate at that holy table. But for Christ his corporal presence in that supper, we utterly deny it. And for this time, let this one place be enough to prove it. For why should the apostle desire to be loosed and to be with Christ, if before he were loosed he were with Christ? If he desired to be with him by faith and by the Spirit, so he was with him before he was loosed. It was otherwise, then, that he desired to be with Christ, even to enjoy his corporal presence. If, then, that he might enjoy his corporal presence, first he must be loosed, then it is clear that while we live here in the body Christ is not corporally present with us; he is not, therefore, corporally present in the sacrament. I have stayed longer upon these points than I purposed. Let us now proceed unto that which followeth.

Nevertheless. Hitherto we have spoken of the apostle's desire in respect of himself, which was to be loosed and to be with Christ, which was best of all for him. Now followeth his desire in respect of them, which was to abide in the body, which was more needful for them, that by the work of his ministry they might be farther builded up in the faith and truth of Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, saith he, though it be best of all for me in respect of myself to be loosed, and to be with Christ, yet it is more needful for you that I abide in the body, and live longer, and therefore in respect of you I desire to live longer. And thus I am in a strait on both sides, whether to choose that which is best for me, or that which is more needful for you, in my desires greatly affecting both.

1. Then, in that the apostle desired to live longer in the body for their sakes, although for himself it had been far the best to have been loosed, hence I observe that our desires are not only to look unto that which is best for ourselves, but unto that which is most for God's glory and our brethren's good. Had it not been the best for Abraham that Isaac his son should have lived, in whom it was promised that all the nations of the earth should be blessed? Gen.

xxii. 10. No doubt he desired it, even from his soul. But when the Lord required him to be offered for a burnt offering, Abraham obeyed, and stretched out his hand to have killed his son. He looked not so much unto his own desires in respect of himself, as unto the glory of the Lord, and therefore addressed himself unto his commandment. So, no doubt, it was far the best for Moses to have his name still to remain in the book of life. Yet, seeing the Lord his fierce wrath hotly kindled against his people, he looked not so much what was best for himself, as what was good for his brethren the children of Israel, and therefore prayed the Lord, either to pardon the people that had sinned, or to raze him out of the book that he had written, Exod. xxxii. 32. So tendered he his brethren's good and God's glory, that he preferred that before himself and his own good. So our apostle, in his brethren's case, which were his kinsmen according to the flesh, wished himself to be separated from Christ for their sakes. He saw and knew what was best for himself, even that he should abide in the vine whereinto he was ingrafted. Yet, as a man, forgetting, or not regarding that which was best for himself, he looked so much unto the good of his brethren that he brake out and said, Rom. ix. 3, 'I would wish myself separated from Christ for my brethren, that are my kinsmen according to the flesh.' And so should it be even with all of us; we should not always look what is best for ourselves, but also what is most meet and needful for God's glory. And though, as we heard before, it were far better for us to be loosed, and to be with Christ in respect of ourselves, than live in the body, yet are we also to look what is more needful for God's glory; and if to live in the body be more requisite and needful for God's glory, then are we to desire to be in the body.

Good for the church, and good for the commonweal it would be, if men could thus frame their desires, not always to run upon that which is best for themselves, but that which is most for God's glory, and for the good of our brethren. For why is it that, in church and in commonweal, things are so far amiss as they are? We complain much, and oh, things were never so bad, never so much amiss in church or in commonweal. And where is the cause? Even within ourselves. Few such parents as was Abraham; few such magistrates as was Moses; few such ministers as was Paul, that so bridle their desires, that they prefer God's glory and the public good before their own good. The minister now can see and say, This were more needful for the church, but this is better for me, more easy for me, more commodious for me, more pleasant unto me, and blame me not if I most respect that which is best for myself; indeed, the worst for himself, but the best in his corrupt account. The magistrate likewise now can say, This and this indeed were best of all for the common good, nevertheless this is better for me, and near is my coat, but

nearer is my shirt, and I count him a very fool that is not chiefly wise for himself. Parents likewise now can say, To bestow some of my goods and substance thus and thus were most indeed for God's glory, and for the good of many of God's children, nevertheless is more needful for my children; and no man may blame me if they be the dearest unto me, if what I have I keep for them. And thus our desires are carried clean otherwise than were our apostle's. He much desired his own private good, but more the glory of God, and the good of others. We much desire the glory of God, and the good of others, shall I say so? I wish it might be truly said of many more that it is; but be it so, we much desire the glory of God, and the good of others, but more our own private good, more that which we count best for us. If, then, we will have such things as are amiss in church and commonweal amended, minister, and magistrate, and all of us must reform our desires.

Howsoever this or that were best for the minister in respect of himself, yet must he look unto that which is more needful for God's glory and the good of his church, and set his desire upon that. Howsoever this or that were best for the magistrate in respect of himself, yet must he look unto that which is more needful for God's glory, and the good of the commonweal, and set his desires upon that. Howsoever this or that might be best of all for us in respect of ourselves, yet, if another thing be more needful for God's glory, and the good of others, we must look unto that, and set our desires on that: 'Look not every man,' saith our apostle, Philip. ii. 4, 'on his own things, but every man also on the things of other men.' Let us, beloved, both minister and magistrate, and all of us thus do; and whatsoever is most for God's glory, and for the good of his church, let us most set our desires on that.

LECTURE XX.

Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And this I am sure of, that I shall abide, and with you all continue, for the furtherance and joy of your faith; that you may more abundantly rejoice in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.—PHILIP. I. 24–26.

A NOTHER thing yet there is, which here is to be noted; and that is, that the apostle saith, that it is more needful for the Philippians that he live longer, than that he be loosed. Whence I observe, that the long life of the faithful pastor is very needful for the church, and the blessing of God on it. A plain proof whereof we have in the example of Jehoiada, touching whom it is said, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17, that 'Joash did uprightly in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest. But after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and did reverence to the king; and the king hearkened unto them, and they left the house of the God of their fathers, and served groves and idols.' What a blessing of the Lord was here upon Joash the king of Judah, and upon all Judah, by the life of Jehoiada the priest! So long as he lived, Joash did that which was good in the sight of the Lord, and Judah walked in the ways of the Lord; but when he was dead, then Joash the king, and Judah with him, revolted from the true service of the Lord, and fell into idolatry. And therefore the Lord, purposing to visit the iniquities of Judah and Jerusalem upon them, threateneth, Isa. iii. 2, to take away from them the judge and the prophet, that is, the magistrate and the minister, as if he should have said that he would root out all civil government, and all ecclesiastical discipline, from amongst them, and bring an utter confusion and desolation upon them. Is it, then, a plague of God upon a land to take away their prophets and their teachers? And is it a visitation of the people's sins upon them? By this, then, ye see that the continu-

ance of the pastor's life among the people is the blessing of the Lord upon the people; I mean the continuance of the good and faithful pastor's life. For otherwise, if the pastor be an idle shepherd, one that despiseth his flock, one that cannot, or will not, feed the tender lambs of Christ Jesus, and lead them forth unto green pastures, and unto the soft running waters, then surely it is a great blessing of the Lord to deliver the sheep from such a shepherd, and to cut him off from feeding his people. And therefore the Lord, promising in mercy to visit his dispersed flock, speaketh thus unto them by his prophet, Ezek. xxxiv. 10, 'Behold, I come against the shepherds; and will require my sheep at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the sheep; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more: for I will deliver my sheep from their mouths, and they shall no more devour them.' As, then, this is a great mercy of the Lord unto the flock of his pasture, when the pastor is an ill one, to deliver them from him, and to cause him to cease from feeding them, whether by death or how else soever, so is it a great blessing of the Lord upon them, when they have a good and faithful pastor and teacher, to continue his life amongst them, for their further growth and increase in the faith and truth of Christ Jesus.

This, then, beloved, should teach you how, when the Lord blesseth you with a faithful pastor, you should be affected towards him; and that is thus, you should even pray unto the Lord for him to continue his life long amongst you, by whose life ye have such a

blessing. Other duties many towards them on your behalf, are commanded, as obedience, where it is said, Heb. xiii. 17, 'Obey them that have the oversight of you, and submit yourselves;' and love, as where it is said, 1 Thes. v. 12, 13, 'Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and have them in singular love, for their work's sake;' and maintenance, as where it is said, Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught in the word make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods.' Whereunto ye are also to add this duty towards them, even to pray for the continuance of their life long amongst you. And surely, if either ye consider the blessing which ye have by the enjoying of them, or the loss which ye have when such are taken from you, ye will see that ye have great cause to pray for their abiding in the flesh amongst you. For what if, after such a faithful pastor, should succeed an idle shepherd, a greedy wolf, an ignorant hireling, a slow-belly, a perverter of the truth, a scandalous man for life, one whose God is his belly, and whose glory is to his shame, as too, too often after such light followeth darkness? How great cause, then, should ye have to wail and lament, and, with Jeremiah, to say, 'How is the gold become so dim?' While, then, ye have them, how ought ye to pray for them, that long ye may have them, and enjoy the benefits of their labours.

But how far otherwise do we, a great many of us, in many places, for so it is with many of us in many places, that if our pastor be a faithful teacher, one that labours amongst us in the word and doctrine, one that keeps nothing back from us, but faithfully delivers unto us the whole counsel of the Lord; we are so far from praying for the continuance of his life, that by all means we labour to make him weary of his life. If we have such a pastor as neither can nor will teach us in the wholesome word of truth, one that will suffer us to go on in our sins, and never awake us out of our dead sleep of security, one that will sow pillows under our elbows, and cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, one that will sort himself unto our manners, and apply himself unto our humours, he is a man fit for us. He is a mild, a soft man, and a good companion, and we wish that he might live for ever with us. But if our pastor, with the prophets of the Lord, threaten the judgments of the Lord against us for our sins; if, with John Baptist, he reprove us boldly to our faces for such crying sins as reign amongst us; if, with the blessed martyr Stephen, in the application of his doctrine, he shall come upon us, and say, 'Ye stiff-necked and of uncircumcised hearts and ears, ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye;' if, with the apostle, he shall rebuke us, and say, 'O foolish people, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?' if he shall lance our sores unto the bottom, that so we may be thoroughly

healed; if he shall wound the hoary scalp of him that goeth on in his wickedness, and lay the axe to the root of our sins: him we can by no means endure, he is a contentious man, a seditious man, a schismatical fellow, a troubler of the world; away with such a man; he is not worthy to live upon the earth. Thus the pastor, from whom it were a mercy of the Lord to deliver us, we love and like; and him, in the continuance of whose life were a blessing of the Lord upon us, we cannot away with. So greatly are we in love with our sins and ignorance, and so little do we love knowledge and the things that belong unto our peace. But, beloved, I persuade myself better things of a great many of you. As already you do, so continue to have them that labour amongst you in singular love, for their work's sake. Let the feet of them that bring you the gospel of Christ Jesus be beautiful unto you. Count the life of your faithful teacher a blessing of the Lord upon you, and pray ye unto the Lord, when ye have such a blessing, for the continuance thereof unto you. This blessing is needful for you as the greatest blessing of this life, and therefore rejoice in it, and pray for it as the greatest blessing of your life. And let this suffice to be observed from the reasons which made the apostle doubt what to choose, whether to live in the body or to remove out of the body. It followeth.

And this am I sure of, &c. In the apostle's narration, which began at the 12th verse, first the apostle told us what success his bands had already had, and then what success he hoped they should have. Touching the success which they should have, we have heard that the apostle certainly looked for, and hoped that they should turn to the salvation of his soul, through his constancy in his bands, whether it were in life or in death. But what should be the success of his bands touching the salvation and deliverance of his body? The apostle now tells the Philippians that, namely, he knew certainly that he should be delivered out of prison, and be restored to them again. And withal he tells them wherefore God would now deliver him, and have him yet to live longer, which was for these two ends: 1, for their furtherance and joy of their faith, *i.e.* that by his ministry they might be confirmed in the faith, and thereby have their joy increased; and, 2, that they might more abundantly rejoice, &c., *i.e.* that they, seeing the mighty power of Christ in delivering him from the mouth of the lion, might more abundantly rejoice in Christ, the author of his deliverance, for delivering him, and for bringing him again to them. The first thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith that he was sure of this, that he should abide in the flesh, and continue with all the Philippians yet for some time longer. Whence I observe that the apostle, in his first imprisonment at Rome, was delivered, and restored unto the churches which before he had planted, which I do the rather gather hence, for that the two words

which the apostle useth ($\tauεποιθως οὗτος$) shew that he knew so certainly that he should be delivered, as he could not otherwise but by the revelation of the Spirit. And in the Epistle to Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 17, in plain words he professeth that he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, meaning of Nero. And the ecclesiastical stories bear witness that after his first imprisonment, by the space of ten years or thereabouts, he preached the gospel, and then returning to Rome again, was slain by Nero, about the 14th year of his reign.

Which may serve to encourage the faithful thus far in their troubles, that whatsoever be their troubles, if it be for his glory, the Lord will deliver them. As he did with Paul, so will he do with us. As our farther trial or present deliverance shall be for his glory, so will he try us or deliver us. Let us therefore in troubles be of good courage, and let us assure ourselves of deliverance, if it be for his glory. Only let us, as himself exhorteth, Ps. l. 15, ‘call upon him in the day of our trouble,’ and then his promise is, we need no revelation for it, that ‘he will deliver us,’ always this condition understood, if our deliverance be for his glory. And what else is it that we should desire, but that he may be glorified in our bodies, whether it be by life or death?

The second thing which here I note, is the end wherefore he saith he should abide, and with them all continue, which was for their furtherance and joy of their faith, that their faith by his ministry might be furthered, and so their joy in the Holy Ghost increased. Whence I observe wherefore the Christian’s life in general, and the minister’s life in particular, is preserved and continued here on earth; and that is, the Christian’s life in general is preserved and continued for the glory of the Lord, and the minister’s life in particular, for the good of God’s church, and of that people over whom they are set. ‘Be of courage, Paul,’ said the Lord unto him, Acts xxiii. 11, ‘for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome;’ as if he should have said, Howsoever the Jews practise against thy life in Jerusalem, yet fear not, I must yet have farther glory by thy life; as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, and there brought glory unto my name, so shall thy life be preserved and continued, to the farther glory of my name, by thy testimony of me at Rome. And so is every Christian, when he is delivered from any peril of sickness, enemies, or the like, to resolve with himself that his life is preserved and continued for the farther glory of his God; and every minister in particular, that his life is preserved and continued for the farther good of God’s church, and for the profit of his people by the work of his ministry. The point is clear enough, and needeth not any large confirmation.

This may serve, first, for the instruction of all Christians in general, and of the ministers in particular. Of all Christians in general, to teach even all

of us to live unto the Lord, and to the glory of his name, to live to do good. This is the end wherefore our life is preserved and continued here on earth; and this being the end in our whole life, we are ever to be looking unto this end. Of ministers in particular, to teach them to spend willingly their whole strength and their life in the work of their ministry, for the edification of the church, and the furtherance of their faith over whom the Lord hath made them overseers. This is the end, also, wherefore they are preserved from all dangers, and their lives continued unto their people; and this being the end, in their whole life they are ever to be looking to this end.

What shall we say, then, unto such Christians in name as live unto themselves, and unto their pleasures? as would have everybody to serve their turn, and care not for others? as desire to live rather to get goods than to do any good? For such there are as so live, as if they were to live unto themselves, and not unto the glory of God; as if the life of others were to be for their good, and their life not for the good of any others; as if they were to scrape as much unto themselves as they could, and not to do any good unto any other. Nay, I add further, that such there are as so live, as if in their life they were to serve sin in the lusts thercof; as if they were to live by the spoil, and hurt, and loss of others; as if they were to fly that which is good, and to do that which is evil. And surely such are here justly reproved, as men never remembering that the continuance of their life should be for God’s glory, or rather as men opposing themselves unto everything that may make for God’s glory. What shall we say, likewise, unto such in the ministry as feed themselves, but not the flock; as seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ’s; as do more harm by their bad example of life, than they do good by their pains in teaching; as either for idleness, or daintiness, or other like reason, will not put their hand unto the Lord his work to help forward the building of his house; nay, as destroy the faith of some which were to be builded up in Christ Jesus? Is this the end wherefore they live in the body, wherefore their life is prolonged among their people? Nay, surely this also serveth for their just reproof, as men abusing that use which God giveth them of life.

But, on the other side, it serveth for the great comfort of all them, be they Christians in general, or ministers in particular, whose life serves for the good of the church. For what greater comfort, if we be ministers, can we have of our life, than that by our life the saints’ hearts be established in the faith, the joy of the faithful be fulfilled, the church of Christ Jesus be builded, the truth of Christ Jesus be maintained, the mouth of all gainsayers be stopped, and our people kept a chaste spouse unto the Lord? Or what greater comfort can we have of our life, whatsoever we be, than that by our life the Lord be glori-

fied, the good of our brethren procured, and the commonwealth bettered? Surely so may the minister, and every Christian, make account that he liveth, if he live unto God and to his brethren's good; and so may he joy in the continuance of his life, if he look unto the end wherefore it is continued. Whatsoever therefore we be, let us remember that we are to live unto him that hath called us out of darkness into light; and in whatsoever peril our life is preserved, let us remember that it is continued for the glory of God and the good of our brethren. And as we are by our calling ministers or others, so let us labour that our abode in the flesh, and continuance in life, may be to the furtherance, and joy, and comfort of our brethren in everything that is good. And let this be spoken, touching the end wherefore the life of Christians in general, and of ministers in particular, is preserved and continued, viz., for the glory of God and the good of his church; which as it serveth for the instruction of all, to teach us ever to look unto the end wherefore our life is continued upon earth, so for the reproof of such as whose life doth no good, and for the comfort of such whose life serves for the good of the church.

Now followeth the other end wherefore the apostle saith he should abide, and with them all continue, viz., that they, seeing the mighty power of Christ Jesus in delivering him from the mouth of the lion, from the cruelty of Nero, might more abundantly rejoice in him, in whom already they did rejoice, for saving him from death, and bringing him again unto them. Whence first I do observe, the great rejoicing which ought to be in the people for their pastor's deliverance out of peril, and for the continuance of his life amongst them; their joy should even abound in Christ Jesus, as in his great blessing and mercy upon them. So we read, that when Peter was delivered out of prison by an angel, there was great joy among the Christians which were assembled in the house of Mary, John Mark his mother, Acts xii. 12, insomuch that it is said of the maid that came to the door, when Peter knocked at the entry door, that 'she opened not the entry door for gladness,' ver. 14, as one so surprised with joy that she could not rest till she had told it; and when the door was opened, and the rest saw, it is said of them that 'they were astonished,' ver. 16, partly through wondering at, and partly through rejoicing for, his deliverance. And so should they that are taught in the word abundantly rejoice when their teacher is freed from trouble or danger, and his life or liberty is continued unto them; for whether it be life or liberty that is granted unto him, it is for their sakes over whom the Lord hath made him overseer; and therefore they are to honour him, and to rejoice for him, as preserved for them and the furtherance of their faith.

Such, then, as grieve at the life or liberty of their faithful pastors; such as practise what possibly they can against the life and liberty of their godly teachers; such as wish and watch every advantage against them, to get their mouths stopped, or deprived of their ministry; such as rejoice in their trouble, imprisonment, or banishment: let such, I say, and all such like, look unto it, whether they belong to the sheepfold of Christ Jesus. 'He that heareth you hearth me,' saith our Saviour Christ, Luke x. 16, 'and he that despiseth you despiseth me.' To refuse, then, to hear the ministers of Jesus Christ is much, because it is to refuse to hear Jesus Christ; likewise, to despise the ministers of Jesus Christ is very much, because it is to despise Jesus Christ; but what then is it to practise mischief against the ministers of Jesus Christ, to rejoice in the loss of their life or liberty, and to band men's selves against them? Surely this is plainly to bewray themselves not to belong to Christ Jesus.

As for us, if we will know that we belong unto Christ Jesus, let us rejoice in the life and liberty of our faithful teachers. The life and liberty of God's faithful ministers cause joy in the hearts of them that belong unto the Lord. Let us, therefore, by this token, discern what we are, good or bad gospelers.

The second thing which hence I observe, is the effect which the examples of the power and goodness of Christ Jesus, in the deliverance of his saints out of their troubles, ought to work in us; such examples should confirm us daily more and more in that rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus. For when we plainly see, as in a spectacle before our eyes, by the deliverance of his saints out of their troubles, that our King and our Saviour beholdeth us from his holy heavens, looks upon our sufferings and our wrongs, takes our matters into his own hands, avengeth us of our enemies, and delivers us out of the will of them that hate us, this should add much unto that rejoicing which before we had, and cause us far more abundantly to rejoice in Christ Jesus, because thus we see that which before we believed, that our King liveth and reigneth, and hath all power given unto him both in heaven and in earth.

But how little such examples work with us, doth appear by our little rejoicing in Christ Jesus. All our rejoicing is in the vanities, and pleasures, and fooleries of this life; neither do we ever vouchsafe to consider the power and the mercy which the Lord sheweth in his saints. And therefore we rejoice not as we should, but as we should not. Oh, let us consider the great things which our Jesus hath done, and still doth for us. Let us not be so negligent as to pass over or to forget the things wherein he sheweth his power and his mercy towards his saints, but let us religiously regard and remember them, that so we may have our rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

LECTURE XXI.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your matters, that ye continue in one spirit, and in one mind, fighting together through the faith of the gospel.—PHILIP. I. 27.

HITHERTO, we have heard the apostle his exordium and his narration. Now that which followeth, both in this chapter and in the rest of this epistle, is for the most part matter of exhortation. A little in the third chapter he furnisheth them with matter of doctrine against certain false teachers, which were crept in amongst them. But because they were well-grounded in the truth by his ministry and apostleship, the special thing, wherein the rest of his epistle is spent, is exhortation unto a Christian life. In this remainder of this chapter, first, the apostle setteth down that general exhortation unto a Christian life, which is indeed the great and main exhortation, whereof all the rest are but branches; and secondly, he insisteth particularly in some of those things wherein the life whereunto he exhorted consisteth. His general exhortation is generally unto such a life and conversation amongst men, as becometh the gospel of Christ, that is, conformed unto the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, that profession and conversation may go hand in hand together, in these words, ‘Only let your conversation be,’ &c. The particulars wherein such a life consisteth, and which here are mentioned, are three: the first, constancy in holding and defending the truth of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, signified in these words, ‘that ye stand in one spirit,’ that is, in one truth of the gospel by one spirit; the second is, unanimity and agreement to stand and fight together for the truth, through the faith of the gospel, signified in these words, ‘and in one mind fighting together,’ &c.; and the third is, patience in sufferings, and wrongs by adversaries, signified by way of dehortation, in these words, ‘and in nothing fear,’ &c. Where these three are, there the life is in a good degree such as becometh the gospel of Christ. That which is inserted in these words, ‘that whether I come,’ &c., is to persuade them unto such a life, without all respect of his coming again unto them; that whether he come and see them, or be absent and hear of them, their life be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. In that which followeth, are set down motives to persuade the exhortation, especially patience in sufferings and wrongs, whereof hereafter. Thus much for the general order and meaning of those words.

Now for the further and more particular opening of the meaning of these words, this that the apostle in the beginning of his exhortation saith, ‘Only let your conversation,’ &c., it may either be referred unto that whereof the apostle spake immediately before, and so have this meaning, I say I shall abide and

continue yet with you, for your furtherance and joy, and rejoicing for me; yet, whatsoever become of me, only look ye to your conversation, that it be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. Or else it may be referred unto all that went before, and so have this meaning: God hath done great things for you, he hath caused his gospel to be preached unto you, and brought you unto the fellowship of the gospel. He hath begun a good work in you, and it is not to be doubted but that he will perform it until the day of Christ. He hath made you to abound in love, in knowledge, and in all judgment. He hath turned my bands to the furthering of the gospel for your comfort, and he hath appointed to deliver me out of bands, and to restore me again unto you, for the furtherance and joy of your faith, and that ye may the more abundantly rejoice in Jesus Christ for me. Only be not ye wanting unto that which becometh you, but let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. Unto wheresoever it be referred, ye see what the meaning is. Now where it is said in the words following, ‘Let your conversation be,’ the word used in the original, πολιτεύεσθε, implieth that they were citizens of a city which is above, and enforceth this construction. Only ye, as citizens of heavenly Jerusalem, carry yourselves, how? As it becometh the gospel of Christ, that is, so that your life be framed after the doctrine of the gospel, and be answerable to your profession. But what! would it serve to make a show of such a conversation for a time, because he was to come again unto them, that when he came unto them, all might be well, howsoever their hypocrisy afterwards brake out? No, in no sort. And therefore the apostle saith, ‘Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.’ What! because I am to come again unto you, that ye may deceive me only by an hypocritical show? Nay; but that whether I come and see you, or be absent and only hear of you, I may hear and see that in sincerity and truth which I desire. Yea, but how should they order their conversation so, that it might be such as became the gospel of Christ? Namely, if they ordered it so, that if he came he might see, and if he were absent he might hear, 1, that they continued or stood fast, (στήνετε), for so the word signifieth, like unto good soldiers which yield no ground, but keep their standing; that, I say, they stood fast in one spirit, that is, that they abode constant in one truth of Christ, by one spirit whereinto they had all drunk; 2, that with joint minds, and one accord amongst themselves, they fought together (συναθλοῦντες) for the truth of

Christ against the adversaries of the gospel, not with carnal weapons, but with the faith of the gospel, with the shield of faith, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, which here he calleth the faith of the gospel, because it cometh by the hearing of the gospel preached; and, 3, that in nothing they feared their adversaries, but courageously encountered them, and patiently endured all wrongs offered by them. If the apostle might hear that thus they stood constant in the truth, not cast down by their adversaries; that thus with one accord they fought together, and threw down their adversaries; that thus courageously they encountered their adversaries, in nothing fearing them, this might in part shew that their conversation were such as became the gospel of Christ. This I take to be the true meaning of these words thus far. Now, let us see what observations we may gather hence for our farther use and instruction.

The first thing which here I note, is the apostle's exhortation unto the Philippians in general, that they should lead such a life; that their conversation should be such as became the gospel of Christ Jesus; that as they professed the gospel of Christ, so they should lead a life agreeable to the gospel of Christ. Whence I observe, that so many as profess the gospel of Christ Jesus, ought to labour by all means to lead a life agreeable to the gospel of Christ Jesus. Which thing our apostle also sheweth in many other exhortations which he maketh to the like purpose, as when he exhorteth the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. ii. 12, to 'walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his kingdom and glory;' where the apostle's meaning is, that as God had vouchsafed them this mercy, to call them unto his kingdom and glory, so they were to walk worthy of him, framing their lives as near as they could unto his life, who was the engraven form of his person. So that, being called by God unto his kingdom and glory, by the preaching of the gospel, we are to labour to walk worthy of God in all godliness and righteousness. So likewise he exhorteth the Ephesians to 'walk worthy of the vocation whereunto they were called,' Eph. iv. 1; where again the apostle's meaning is, that as they were called to be saints in Christ Jesus, so they should walk worthy of that calling, even as became saints in Christ Jesus. So that, being saints by calling, we are to labour to be saints in life and conversation. As, then, is our calling, as is our profession, so are we to labour to lead a life agreeable to our calling, agreeable to our profession; and, possessing the gospel of Christ Jesus, to lead a life agreeable to the gospel of Christ Jesus. And why? The reasons are very clear. As, 1, that the gospel of Christ Jesus be not evil spoken of; even as young women are taught, Tit. ii. 5, to be 'discreet, chaste, keeping at home, good, and subject to their husbands, that the word of God be not evil spoken off.' For what readier way to cause the profane and wicked to blaspheme the gospel of Jesus Christ, than when the

professors of the gospel live not according to the gospel? 'Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?' saith our apostle, Rom. ii. 21-24. 'Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, committest thou sacrilege? thou that gloriest in the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.' And if it may be said unto us, thou that professest the gospel of Jesus Christ, doest thou lead a life which becometh not the gospel of Jesus Christ? shall not the gospel of Jesus Christ be blasphemed and evil spoken of among the profane atheists and miscreants of this sinful world through us? Yes, surely, they shall say unto us, as the Gentiles did to the children of Israel, which polluted God's name among them, Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 'These are the people of the Lord,' these are the professors of the gospel, these be the fruits of their holy profession, and of the gospel amongst them. 2. They that profess the gospel of Christ, are to labour to live agreeably thereunto, that they may adorn the gospel of Christ Jesus in all things, Titus ii. 10, and win others by their holy conversation unto righteousness and holiness, even as servants are taught to shew all good faithfulness, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and as Peter exhorteth, saying, 1 Peter ii. 2, 'Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you as of evil-doers, may, by your good works which they shall see, glorify God in the day of visitation.' For when they that fear not the Lord shall see our good works, then shall they be brought to glorify God our Father which is in heaven; when they shall see that, as our profession is holy, so our life also is holy, then shall they begin to suspect their own ways, and to turn unto the Lord; as that place of Peter maketh plain, 1 Peter iii. 1, where he exhorteth 'the wives to be subject to their husbands;' and why? 'That even they which obey not the word, may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.' Whence it plainly appeareth that by the holy conversation of them that are religious and godly, be they men or women, they that have no good will unto the word are oftentimes won unto the obedience of the word. 3. They that profess the gospel, are to labour to live as becometh the gospel, because of the commandment, Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' because of the promise, Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule of the gospel, peace shall be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;' because it becometh citizens of heaven to have their conversation in heaven, and them that are called to the knowledge of God to walk as the children of God; and because it is the lesson which their profession should teach them, as the apostle witnesseth, saying, Titus ii. 11, 12, 'The

grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, and teaching us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for the blessed hope,' &c. In one word, so only the gospel is the glad tidings of their salvation unto the professors of the gospel, if their conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ ; and, therefore, they are to labour that their conversation be such as becometh their profession.

This, then, may serve for a just reproof of many carnal gospellers in our day. For many gospellers there are by profession, but not many that lead such a life as becometh the gospel of Christ ; many there are that profess they know God, not many that shew forth the fruit thereof in a holy conversation, such as our apostle speaketh of where he saith, Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they know God ; but by works they deny him, and are abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.' So that it may be said of gospellers as one said of doctors, many doctors, few doctors, many in name, few in deed ; so, many gospellers, few gospellers, many in name and few in deed, many in profession, few in practice ; many in word, few in work ; many in tale, few in life and consideration. For is it not said of many that make a very great profession of the gospel and of religion, that they are hard men, unmerciful men, men that 'grind the faces of the poor, and sell the needy for shoes' ? as the prophet speaketh. Are there not many such that are noted to be usurers, oppressors, extortioners, and the like ? Is it not said of many such, that they are as ready to portion and to covenant for their dues with their pastor as any men ; that they are as ready to turn their tenants a-grazing as any men ; that they are as ready to join house to house, to lay field to field, and to enclose all unto themselves as any men ? Is it not said that the complaint of the poor, and fatherless, and widow is taken up as much against them as against any men ? I would it were not said in Gath, and noised in the streets of Askelon ; I wish the profane atheist, the superstitious papist, and the covetous worldling, could not justly twit us with it. Alas ! beloved, do we not see and consider that thus we make our God to be blasphemed, our profession to be slandered, and the gospel of Christ Jesus to be evil spoken of for our sakes ? Do we not see and consider that atheist, and papist, and every earthly-minded man makes his vantage of these things, and thinks his own ways well patronaged by our ways ? Do we not see and consider, that by such our life and conversation, the froward and obstinate are hardened, the weak are offended, and the edge and courage of many much cooled and abated ? If such spots and stains in our life did only touch ourselves, yet were we to look unto them, because without holiness of life no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. But when men, seeing that we

make a good profession, and yet live nothing accordingly thereunto, thereupon take occasion to speak evil of our profession, of our religion, of the gospel of Christ Jesus, how careful ought we to be of our life and conversation. 'Woe to the world,' saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. xviii. 7, 'because of offences ! It must needs be that offences shall come ; but woe be to that man by whom the offence cometh.' And surely if by our life not answerable to our profession we shall bring a slander upon our religion, our profession, upon the gospel, if by our life some shall be weakened, others hardened, the edge of others abated, and others turned out of the good way, then woe shall be unto us because of such offence in our life.

I doubt not but such as observe these things in us, and fill their mouths with talking of them, both are guilty of as crying sins themselves, and most injuriously tax many of us of these things ; but the more ready they are to observe and to tax without a cause, the more careful we are to be that they have no just cause of taxing. Let us therefore, beloved, as we profess the gospel of Christ, so labour to live as becometh the gospel of Christ. As the gospel teacheth us to be holy, so let us be holy in all manner of conversation ; as the gospel teacheth us to walk in the light, so let us walk in the light, and have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness ; as the gospel teacheth us to love God, and one another, so let us love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourself ; as the gospel is the gospel of peace, so let us be at peace with all men ; as the gospel is true, so let us speak the truth every man unto his neighbour, and lie not one unto another, &c. Otherwise we walk not as becometh the gospel of Christ. In a word, let us not be hearers or professors of the word only, but doers also of the same, lest we deceive ourselves.

Again, as this note may serve for the just reproof of such as profess well, but live not so well, so may it also serve for a just defence against the unjust slander of our adversaries, who bear the world in hand that holiness of life is a matter that we never urge, that we make no great reckoning of. Yourselves have heard, and can witness, how often, since this very exercise hath begun, you have been urged to run forward in the race of righteousness, and to make an end of your salvation with fear and trembling ; to labour to be blameless and pure, and the sons of God, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation ; to have your conversation in heaven ; to communicate unto the necessities of the poor and distressed saints ; to abound in love, in knowledge, and in all judgment ; to be filled with the fruits of righteousness ; and to strive to be pure, and without offence until the day of Christ. And now ye hear, that if ye have fellowship in the gospel, your conversation is to be as it becometh [the gospel] of Christ. Know them therefore to be of their father the devil, who was a liar from the beginning, and is the father thereof. And suffer not yourselves to be deceived by

them, who, when they cannot otherwise prevail against the truth, fall to slander the professors of the truth. And let this suffice to be noted from the apostle's general exhortation, whence ye see that such as profess the gospel of Jesus Christ should labour by all means to lead such a life as becometh the gospel of Christ.

But what, will it serve the turn, for a time, in the presence or company of such and such persons, to make a show of such a life and conversation, as hypocrites do, which do all that they do to please men? No; and therefore the apostle saith, 'Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, and only hear of you, I may hear and see that in sincerity and truth which I desire.' Whence I observe, that the life and conversation of such as profess the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be framed, not after the will of men, but after the will of God; not to please men, but to please the Lord, that whether man be present or absent, their life be such as it ought to be: 'If I should please men,' saith the apostle, Gal. i. 10, 'I were not the servant of Christ.' The apostle speaketh it of preaching the doctrine of the gospel, that if he should apply himself to the humours of men, and preach things pleasing unto them, he should not please God, 'which trieth the heart.' But it may also very well be applied unto the life and conversation of men, that if we shall only frame our lives unto men's likings, and for the time only seek to please them, our life shall not be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. And therefore the Lord himself sharply reproveth it in Ezekiel's hearers, where he saith, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'My people sit before me, and hear my words, but they will not do them; for with their mouths they make jests, and their heart goeth after their covetousness;' where ye see the Lord taxeth Ezekiel's hearers to be such as, when he preached unto them, sat as his people, and hearkened unto their prophet, and carried themselves well in his presence, but in their hearts ran after their covetousness, and out of his presence made but a mock of all that he spake unto them. And this was one of the sins wherefore the Lord threatened to lay the land desolate and waste.

Let this, then, teach us to beware of hypocrisy. It is not for us to come unto this place, here to kneel us down on our knees, to knock our breasts, to lift up our eyes unto heaven, to sit and hearken unto the preacher, and when we go hence to make a mock at the things that were spoken, or to forget them, or, notwithstanding whatsoever show of godliness we made in the church, in our houses to return to our vomit. For what else is this but here to play the hypocrites, and here to make a show of godlessness, the power whereof at home we deny? And what is unto hypocrites but a woe? In the ordering therefore of our life, let us not depend upon man's presence or absence; but in a religious fear of the Lord, let every one of us so walk as becometh us, knowing that whether man

sees or sees us not, yet God seeth us, and considereth all our ways. It is the presence and pleasure of the Lord that we are to look unto. Let our life therefore, and our conversation, be as in his presence, and such as may please him, howsoever we please or displease men. And let this suffice to be noted touching the quality of such a conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ. Whence ye see that it is not to be hypocritical, or framed after men's liking, for the time to please them, but to be led in the fear of the Lord to please him.

But how may we so order our conversation, that it may be such as becometh the gospel of Christ? That the apostle now sheweth in the next place, as namely, 'if we continue in one spirit, if we fight together in one mind through the faith of the gospel, and if we fear our adversaries in nothing.'

If we continue in one spirit; that is, if we stand fast, and abide constant in one truth of Christ, by one spirit, wherinto we are all baptized. Whence I observe one special part of a conversation agreeable to the gospel of Christ, and that is, constant abiding in the truth. If we stand fast, and abide constant in the truth, this is one note that our conversation is such as becometh the gospel of Christ Jesus. 'If ye continue in my word,' saith our Saviour, John viii. 31, 'ye are verily my disciples;' as if he should have said, If ye stand fast against all assaults whatsoever, and quit yourselves like men, and abide constant in the truth which I have taught you, so ye shew yourselves to be my disciples, and to walk worthy of me. So that to continue and abide constant in the truth shews us to be Christ his disciples, and sheweth our conversation to be such as becometh the gospel; wherenpon it is that we are so often exhorted to continue in the grace of God, to continue in the faith, to abide constant in the truth, to stand fast and shrink not.

Beware, then, beloved, of revolting from the truth, wherein ye have been taught in Christ Jesus; of being carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the deceit of men, and with craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; of yielding, and giving ground unto the adversaries of the truth. 'He that continueth unto the end, he shall be saved.' But if ye start aside like a broken bow, surely ye walk not as becometh the gospel of Christ. Look to it, then, that ye continue in the things which ye have learned, and that ye fall not away from the hope of your profession.

Another thing also hence I observe, which is, that to continue and abide constant in the truth, is wholly the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is not by our own wisdom, power, and strength, but only by the power of the Holy Spirit, that we stand fast, without which we can no more stand in the truth, than can our bodies stand without our soul and spirit.

Both, therefore, let us beware that we grieve not the Holy Spirit by our evil deeds, or by our evil words; and let us always pour out fervent prayers

unto him, that he will vouchsafe ever to abide with us, to strengthen us to abide in the truth.

It followeth, ‘*And in one mind,*’ &c. Whence I observe another special note of a conversation agreeable to the gospel of Christ, and that is, unity and concord, and love amongst ourselves. If we be knit together in one mind, so that as we are one body in Christ Jesus, so we be of one heart and one soul, dwelling together as brethren in unity, love, and good agreement, this is a good token that our conversation is such as becometh the gospel of Christ. ‘By this shall all men know,’ saith our Saviour, John xiii. 35, ‘that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.’ A good note that we are Christ his disciples, and that we walk as becometh the gospel of Christ, if we live in love and concord one with another, if we be of one mind together.

Let us beware, then, how we nourish hatreds, malice, strife, and contention in ourselves one against another, for these things do so distract us [one] from another, as that being thus affected one towards another, we do not walk as becometh the gospel of Christ, or rather, we are injurious unto the gospel of Christ; for thus it cometh to pass, that the gospel which we profess is evil spoken of. Let us therefore be knit together in one mind, and beware of every thing that may distract and dismember us.

Another thing hence I observe, which is, that this Christian concord must be to fight together against such adversaries as fight against the truth, be they heretics and schismatics, that fight against it and us with lies, slanders, envies, false doctrines, and the like; or be they tyrants, that fight against it and us, with fire, sword, imprisonment, banishment, confiscation of our goods, or the like. We are not only to stand stoutly and constantly for the truth against them, without being thrown down by them, but being knit together one with another, in one mind, we are

jointly and with one accord to fight together for the truth against them, as good soldiers to throw them down, that when we have finished our course, we may say with our apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 7, that ‘we have fought a good fight,’ otherwise we walk not as becometh the gospel of Christ.

Let them, then, look to this, that either for ease and idleness, or for fear of displeasure some way, or upon any other carnal reason whatsoever, will rather betray the truth than they will fight for it; and seeing none is crowned but he that striveth lawfully, let us fight together here, that there we may be crowned.

But how are we to fight for the truth against the devil and all his instruments, the adversaries thereof? Some by praying, some by preaching, some by writing, some by patiently sustaining for the truth’s sake, and all of us, as hence I observe, by the faith of the gospel. ‘Resist the devil,’ saith the apostle, ‘and he will fly from you.’ Resist him, and fight against him. How? By faith, 1 John v. 4, ‘for this is the victory that overcometh the world,’ and the prince thereof, ‘even our faith;’ and therefore the apostle’s exhortation is, Eph. vi. 16, ‘Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith you may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.’ This is the armour wherewith we must all of us fight.

By an internal faith, then, wrought in us by the gospel, let us all of us fight against Satan for the truth, and by an external confession of the faith against all tyrants, heretics, and schismatics whatsoever. Let us hold fast the mystery of faith in a good conscience against all the enemies of the truth, and let us boldly always make confession of our faith, both in word, by writing, teaching, disputing, professing; and in deed, by joining ourselves to the professors of the truth, and constantly and patiently abiding for the truth.

LECTURE XXII.

And in nothing fear your adversaries: which is to them a token of perdition, and to you of salvation, and that of God.—PHILIP. I. 28.

A THIRD thing also is here mentioned, namely, courage against the adversaries of the truth, set down here in our reading by way of dehortation, *And in nothing fear,* &c., but is thus to be understood in true coherence with that which went before, ‘Let your conversation,’ &c., ‘that whether,’ &c., I may hear and see that ye continue in one spirit, and in one mind, fighting, &c., and that in nothing ye fear your adversaries; for so we are to understand the apostle, that having exhorted the Philippians to such a conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, he doth particularly specify some things whereby they might give proof unto him of such a conversa-

tion, as namely, if he might hear or see that they continued in one spirit, and in one mind, fighting together, &c., and in nothing fearing the adversaries, or being in nothing afraid of the adversaries. Thus, then, I read these words, not by way of dehortation, but as depending on the former words, ‘and in nothing fearing the adversaries,’ or, ‘and being in nothing afraid of the adversaries.’ The Syriac interpreter readeth, ‘in nothing fear our adversaries’; our reading is, ‘in nothing fear your adversaries.’ But in the original is neither read *our* nor *your* adversaries, but as I said before, ‘in nothing fearing the adversaries,’ or, ‘fearing them that oppose them—

selves.' The meaning is, that if he might hear or see that both they stood fast by the power of the Spirit against the adversaries of the truth, and that they jointly fought together against the adversaries of the truth, as men knit together in one mind, and likewise that in nothing they feared them that opposed themselves against the truth, and the professors thereof, this should be a good proof unto him that their conversation was such as became the gospel of Christ.

Hence, then, I observe a third special part and mark of such a conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, which is Christian courage against the adversaries of the truth, and of the professors thereof. If in nothing we fear the adversaries of the church and of the truth, but take a good courage against the dragon and his angels, this is a good note of such a conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ. Whereunto the Holy Ghost seemeth to give so many testimonies, as he doth often dissuade all fear of whatsoever and whomsoever exalt themselves against God. 'Fear ye not them,' saith our blessed Saviour, Matt x. 28, 'which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' In which place our blessed Saviour putteth the very extremity of that which any adversary can do against us. For what can any cruel tyrant or bloody persecutor do more than kill the body? Nebuchadnezzar's rage and fury against those three servants of the Lord, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, can no more but take hold of their bodies, and cast them into a hot fiery furnace. And the devil himself, when he would wreak his malice upon Job, what could he do more than touch him in his goods and in his body? Job i. and ii. Assault the soul the devil may by many temptations, and poison the soul heretics may by their damnable heresies, but none of them all can kill the soul; neither can any of them all prevail farther either against the soul, to infect or defile it by heresies or other pollutions, or against the body, to kill or afflict it, than they have power from God. The Jews in their rage may stone Stephen to death, Acts vii. 59, but though Nebuchadnezzar in his rage command the 'furnace to be hot seven times hotter than it was wont, and cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the midst of it, yet not one hair of their heads shall be burnt, nor their coats singed, nor any smell of fire come upon them,' Dan. iii. 19, 21, 27. And why, but because the Lord giveth power over the one, and not over the other? The very extremity, then, which any adversary can do against us is to kill the body; and that, if the Lord give leave, they may do; yet, saith the Lord, fear them not; seeing they can do no more, fear them not.

Yea, but they are many, and we but few, how should we but fear them? Nay, though they be many and we but few, how should we fear them, seeing our great Captain, Christ Jesus, hath said unto us,

Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock'? Wherein he implieth that the adversaries are many, and we but few; yet (saith he), 'little flock, fear not.' And shall he bid us not fear, and shall we fear? Elisha, we read, feared not the king of Syria, nor all his horses and chariots, nor his mighty host, because he knew that 'they that were with him were more than they that were against him.' 2 Kings vi. 16. Be we never so few, we are to take unto us that weapon of faith whereof we spake before, and to believe that God is with us, and then we are not to fear, but with good courage and comfort to say, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' Rom. viii. 31; for surely if he be with us, none shall be able to prevail against us. Yea, but they are mighty, powerful, and strong. Yea, but God that dwelleth on high is mightier; and he the adversaries that oppose themselves against us tyrants, or heretics, or 'spiritual wickednesses which are in the high places,' his power is enough to quell them, and to turn all that they can do against us to the furtherance of his gospel and to our salvation. And why are they mightier and stronger than we? Is it because they are more than we? One God and Saviour of us all, Christ Jesus, [is] known for them all. If he go forth with our armies, nay, if he go forth with us alone, with thee or with me, hell gates shall not be able to prevail against us.

What then? Are we desperately to run upon their pikes, and to put ourselves in danger, or securely to walk, and only contemn them? No; these are extremities on the other side, and either to run ourselves into danger when we need not, or to wish assaults by Satan, grappling with heretics, persecution by tyrants; or, on the other side, to sleep the matter, when such adversaries lay their batteries against us, what else is it but to tempt the Lord by wilfulness and security? We are to fear them so that we avoid them, and run not ourselves into the danger of them when we need not, and we are so to fear them that we take heed that we be not circumvented by them. For our blessed Saviour himself so feared, that he ran not himself into the danger either of any other adversary, or of the devil, when he was tempted, but 'was led aside by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil,' Mat. iv. 1; and so he feared that he took heed of being circumvented, either by any other adversary, or by the devil, and therefore returned upon his false allegations of *scriptum est*, true allegations of *scriptum est*. And so we are willed to 'fly into this city, when when we are persecuted in that,' Mat. x. 23; to 'beware of dogs, and of evil workers,' Philip. iii. 2; and to 'watch, because our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Peter v. 8. So that we are to fear them to avoid them, and to fear them to beware of them. But we are not to fear them as to be daunted or dismayed by them, or to forsake the truth for them. We are not to fear them, as for fear of them to join ourselves unto them,

and to shrink from the hope of a good profession ; but herein we are to take a good courage to stand against them, without being thrown down by them, and with one mind to fight together against them to throw them down. And in this sense it is where such like exhortations are, as not to fear the adversaries, not to fear them as to join ourselves unto them, or to shrink from a good profession for them, but in Christ his cause, and in the defence of the truth, to take a good courage against them, even as our Saviour willeth, where he saith, John xvi. 33, ‘ In the world ye shall have affliction ; but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.’ Though the world afflict and persecute you for the truth’s sake, yet fear not, nor shrink from the truth, but be of good comfort, and stand and fight for the truth, for though haply they prevail against us, and have their wills over us, yet neither do they overcome, nor are we overcome ; but if we die for the truth, our soul marcheth valiantly, and we triumph gloriously.

This, then, may serve for a just reproof of them that, for fear of the adversaries, shrink and fall away from the hope of a good profession. Fear them we shall, even in God’s cause and the gospel’s, the best of us, insomuch that it shall be needful to say unto Paul, ‘ Be of good courage, Paul,’ Acts xxiii. 11, and unto all of us, ‘ Fear not, little flock,’ Luke xii. 32, ‘ Be of good comfort,’ John xvi. 33 ; for, while we live here in the body of this flesh, we have our weakness and infirmities, our wants which had need to be supplied, our falls which had need to be pardoned, and our faint hearts which had need to be encouraged. But whoso feareth them so, that for fear of them he fall away from a good profession, it had been better for him never to have known the way of truth, than, after he hath known it, to turn away from it for fear of any adversary. Such our fathers have heard of, and some of us have seen. But let us hearken unto our blessed Saviour’s exhortation, thrice repeated, not to fear the adversaries, Mat. x. 26-33. He hath there said, ‘ Whosoever shall confess me before man, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.’ And again, ver. 38, 39, ‘ He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall save it.’ That chapter is well worth the reading for this purpose, wherein our Saviour abundantly preareth and armeth his children against persecution and fear of any adversaries.

Yea, but what reason is there but to fear the adversaries ? In the very next words immediately following, the apostle giveth three reasons to encourage the Philippians, and in them us. As, 1, that the adversaries persecute the truth, and persecute them, it is to the adversaries a sure token of perdition ; and why

should any fear to see his adversaries run unto destruction ? 2. That they fight together against them, and fear them not, is to them a sure token of salvation ; and why should any man fear a mark of his salvation ? 3. That persecution causeth perdition to the adversaries, and salvation unto them ; it is of God, and why should any fear persecution by the adversaries, which God turneth to the destruction of the persecutors, and to the salvation of the persecuted ? This I take to be the argument and sense of these words.

Which is to them a token of perdition. This is the first motive and reason to persuade the Philippians in nothing to fear the adversaries which oppose themselves against them and against the truth, even because this same thing, that they are adversaries to them and to the truth, is an evident token of destruction to their adversaries. Whence I observe, that the fury and rage of tyrants and persecutors against the truth, and professors thereof, is an infallible sign of their destruction. ‘ Malice,’ saith the prophet, Ps. xxxiv. 21, ‘ shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall perish.’ Do the wicked, then, and ungodly of the earth, malign the children of God ? This surely is a token of their destruction, for ‘ malice shall slay the wicked.’ Do they hate and persecute the children of God ? This surely is a token unto them of perdition, for ‘ they that hate the righteous shall perish.’ Very plain to this purpose is that of the apostle, 2 Thes. i. 6, 7, where he saith, ‘ It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, when the Lord Jesus shall shew himself from heaven with his mighty angels,’ &c. ; where the judgment of the Lord is very plain and peremptorily set down against them that trouble and persecute the saints of God. Do the children of darkness, then, trouble and persecute the children of light ? It is a plain forerunner and prognostication of that fearful and everlasting perdition wherewith they shall be punished, ‘ when the Lord Jesus shall shew himself from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them.’ And the more they rage against God’s children, the more manifestly they declare that they run to their own destruction ; as Cain, when he slew his brother Abel, and Jezebel, when she destroyed the Lord his prophets, then they ran amain to their destruction. Before, when Cain was wroth with his brother, and Jezebel imagined mischief against the Lord his prophets, they were in the high way ; but when their rage burst out into cruel murder, then they marched furiously, and posted apace to their destruction.

Howbeit, here ye must understand that persecution and rage against the saints of God is only an infallible sign of destruction unto them that obstinately persist therein ; for if God grant grace unto repentance, their sin shall no more be had in remembrance. Even as we see in our apostle, who persecuted the church of

God extremely, and wasted it, as himself confesseth, Gal. i. 13; but he did it ignorantly through unbelief, and therefore afterwards was received unto mercy, and was made the great instrument of the Lord, to the salvation of many thousands. But unto them that go on with an high hand, and as they have begun so continue to persecute the church of God, this is an infallible token of their perdition, yea, it is a clear cause of their destruction; as we see heavy plagues and judgments to have overtaken Hananiah, Shemaiah, Amaziah, and others, because they were malicious enemies against his prophets, Jeremiah, Amos, and others, Jer. xxviii. 16, Amos vii. 17.

The use which our apostle here teacheth us to make hereof is this, not to fear the adversaries that oppose themselves against us; for when they persecute us from one city to another, beat us, imprison us, and every way afflict us, whom hurt they? Even themselves, they run themselves upon the rocks, and bring upon themselves swift damnation. They think they have great masteries over us, but, indeed, themselves smart for it. Let them therefore look unto it, how they hold on to wreak their malice upon us, and let us not fear all that ever they do or can do against us.

Yea, but though they hurt themselves, yet they hurt us also. How should we, then, but fear them? Nay, that is the next reason wherefore we are not to fear them, because their persecution and rage against us is no harm unto us, but a token unto us of salvation.

And to you of salvation; that is, the fury and rage of the adversaries against you, if ye stand fast and fight together with one mind, through the faith of the gospel, is a plain token unto you of your salvation. Whence I observe that persecution by the adversaries is unto God's children a token of their salvation. 'We rejoice,' saith the apostle, 2 Thes. i. 4, 5, 'of you in the churches of God, because of your patience and faith,' &c. Again, Gal. vi. 17, 'I bear in my body,' saith the apostle, 'the marks of the Lord Jesus.' Whereby he signifieth that his afflictions were the very marks of his salvation through Christ Jesus, as whereby he was made like unto him. Again, 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' And again, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. v. 10. The

Scriptures are very plentiful to this purpose, clearly shewing that persecution by the adversaries is unto God's children a token of their salvation. A token, I say, but not a cause; for that of the apostle is ever true, Rom. viii. 15, that 'the afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory which shall be shewed unto us.' Unto the adversaries, indeed, their persecution and rage against us is so a token that it is also a cause of their destruction; for sin being a just cause of death, according to that of the apostle, Rom. vi. 23, 'the wages of sin is death,' surely this great and grievous sin, of persecuting the truth and the professors thereof, must needs be a just cause of their endless destruction. But unto us their persecution and their rage against us is only a token, not a cause of our salvation; for both to suffer for Christ is the gift of God, as it is in the next verse, and salvation also through sufferings is his gift by grace through faith. So that it is no cause, but it is unto us a token of salvation, as both this and many other places shew.

Howbeit, here ye must also understand that so their persecution and rage against us is a token unto us of salvation, if we continue in one spirit, and in one mind, fighting together against them, through the faith of the gospel, and in nothing fearing the adversaries. It is not standing for a while, and not continuing, or fighting for a blow or two, and then giving the bucklers, or taking courage for a spurt, and afterwards, for fear, falling away, that betokens our salvation. But 'he that continueth unto the end, he shall be saved,' Mat. x. 22; he that fighteth lawfully, and as he should, he shall be crowned, 2 Tim. ii. 5; and he that for fear flatly falleth away, purchaseth unto himself a fearful judgment, Hab. vi. 6.

The use which our apostle teacheth us to make hereof is this, as of the former, not to fear the adversaries which oppose themselves against us, for what if we be tried by mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, by bonds and imprisonment? What if we be stoned, hewn asunder, slain with the sword, afflicted and tormented many ways? This is unto us a token of our salvation. They think that thus they hurt us, and have their wills over us, but, indeed, thus they further our reckoning in the day of Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, not fear what they do or can do against us, but let us be of good courage, and hold fast the profession of our hope unto the end.

LECTURE XXIII.

For unto you it is given for Christ, that not only ye should believe in him, but also suffer for his sake; having the same fight which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.—PHILIP. I. 29, 30.

YEA, but how and whence is it that persecution betokeneth perdition to the adversaries, and salvation unto us? It is of God, as our apostle in the

next words saith; and this is the third motive or reason which the apostle useth, to persuade the Philippians not to fear the adversaries, because it is of God

that persecution is perdition to the adversaries, and salvation unto them. Whence I observe, that it is of God that tribulation is recompensed unto them that trouble us, and salvation unto us which are troubled. This also our apostle plainly witnesseth in another place, 2 Thes. i. 6, 7, where he saith, ‘It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ; and to you which are troubled rest with us,’ &c. ; where not only this is manifestly set down, that God recompenseth tribulation to troublers, and rest to the troubled, but withal, that it is a righteous thing with God so to do. A righteous thing indeed with God, in respect of his justice to the one, and a righteous thing in respect of his promise unto the other ; for in respect of his justice, it is a righteous thing with him to recompense tribulation to them that trouble his saints, because they deserve to have vengeance rendered unto them in flaming fire, according to that of the apostle, Rom. vi. 23, ‘The wages of sin,’ that which is due in justice unto sin, ‘is death,’ and damnation ; and judgment merciless, due in justice unto him that sheweth no mercy, James ii. 13, and, therefore, doubtless unto him that without all mercy rageth and persecuteth. And in respect of his promise, it is a righteous thing with him to recompense rest unto them that are troubled, because he hath promised the kingdom of heaven to them that suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake, saying, Mat. v. 10, ‘Blessed are they which suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ And again, 2 Tim. ii. 12, ‘If we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ.’ That persecution, then, causeth perdition to the adversaries, and salvation unto us, it is of God, who in justice rendereth unto them as they have deserved, and for his promise’ sake rendereth unto us as he hath promised.

For this ye must here note and understand, that persecutions, afflictions, sufferings, and wrongs by adversaries, are in themselves, and in their own nature, punishments of sin, as is also death ; and hereby God in justice might punish our sins and our iniquities ; for if he should bring upon us the bloody persecutions of such tyrants as were Nero, Domitian, and the rest of those cruel persecutors in the primitive church, he might thus plague us for our offences, and himself be just in all his ways, and holy in all his works. But unto us his beloved ones, and his redeemed, these things are not that which in themselves and in their own nature they are, and which in God’s justice they might be unto us, even punishments of our sins ; but only fatherly corrections and loving chastisements, whereby in mercy God exerciseth us, represseth sin in us, and bolteth the bran of corruption out of us here in the body or this flesh. And as unto us in mercy, death is made of God, not that which in its own nature it is, a punishment of sin, but an entrance and passage unto life, so in mercy hath he promised, that afflictions, persecutions, and the like, shall be unto us, not that

which, in their own nature, are the beginnings of greater miseries, but forerunners of our salvation in the day of Christ Jesus. It is not then of the nature of suffering persecution, you see, but it is of God that persecution betokeneth unto us salvation, that salvation is recompensed unto us which are troubled. He in mercy hath promised that so it shall be, and therefore so it shall be, and it is a righteous thing with him that it be so.

The use which our apostle here teacheth us to make hereof, is, as of the former, not to fear persecution by the adversaries, which oppose themselves against the truth, and against us for the truth’s sake ; for seeing God turneth their persecution and rage against us, to their perdition and to our salvation, why should we fear them ? Whatsoever therefore they practise against us, let us rest and repose ourselves in our God. He shall stretch out his hand upon the furiousness of our enemies, but his right hand shall save us ; he shall recompense the adversaries their wickedness, and destroy them in their own malice, but he shall wipe all tears from our eyes, and after we have drank of the brook in the way, lift up our head above all our adversaries.

Again, is it of God that persecution causeth unto us salvation ? This, then, may farther teach us, that by suffering persecution we do not merit salvation. For if it be of merit that our sufferings bring salvation unto us, then it is not of God, but the cause is in ourselves ; and if it be of God, then is it not of merit, nor is the cause of our salvation in ourselves : ‘Not according to the works which we do,’ or sufferings which we suffer, ‘but according to his mercy he saveth us ;’ for neither have we wherein to rejoice by works, nor are any sufferings of this present time worthy of that glory which shall be shewed unto us, nor is there ‘any other name under heaven whereby we may be saved, but only by the name of Christ Jesus.’ He that rejoiceth, therefore, let him rejoice in the Lord, of whom it is that our persecutions and sufferings work unto our salvation. And let this be spoken of this third motive or reason, whereby you see that we are not to fear the adversaries, because God recompenseth their persecution unto them with perdition, and unto us with salvation.

It followeth, ‘*For unto you it is given*,’ &c. These words are both a proof of that which went immediately before, and a fourth motive likewise to persuade the apostle’s former intendment. Immediately before he had said, that God in persecution gave them a token of their salvation. The proof here is : ‘Unto you it is given of God by grace to suffer for Christ his sake ;’ therefore in suffering God giveth you a token of your salvation ; or thus, sufferings for Christ are testimonies of grace unto you of God, therefore they are arguments and tokens of salvation unto you of God. And as thus these words serve for proof of that, so are they a notable motive to persuade the Philippians not

to fear the adversaries ; for thus out of the apostle's words I frame the motive. Who will be afraid of a singular gift of God ? But to suffer for Christ his sake is a singular gift of God to you, therefore ye are not to fear persecution by the adversaries. And that to suffer for Christ his sake is a gift of God, he sheweth *à pari*, from the like ; as to believe in Christ is the gift of God, so to suffer for Christ, both gifts of God ; and unto whom the one is given, the other may not seem strange. ' For unto you it is given,' to wit by grace, for so the word signifieth, *χάρισθη*, for Christ, that is, in Christ his cause, ' not only that ye should believe in him,' as others profess they do, ' but also to suffer for his sake,' which many others shrink to do. Even both these, faith in Christ and persecution for Christ his sake, are the gift and grace of God towards you.

Here then, first, I note, that the apostle saith, it was given by grace unto the Philippians to believe in Christ. Whence I observe, that faith in Christ is the gift of God by grace ; which also Christ himself teacheth us, where he saith, John vi. 65, ' No man can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father.' Whereby he meaneth, that no man can come unto him, that is, can believe in him and his gospel, except it be given him of his Father. For so by coming unto him divers times in that chapter, is meant believing in him, as when it is said, ver. 35, ' He that cometh unto me shall not hunger ; and he that believeth on me,' which expoundeth the former, ' shall never thirst.' And again, ver. 37, ' Him that cometh unto me, I cast not away,' which is all one with that, ' He that believeth in me shall not perish.' So that it is clear, that when our Saviour saith, that ' no man can come unto him except it be given him of the Father,' the meaning is, that no man can believe in Christ, except it be given him of God. And to the Hebrews, Christ Jesus is called ' the author and finisher of our faith,' Heb. xii. 2. And wherefore was it, that when Christ preached, and when his apostles and disciples preached, some believed, and others believed not, but because unto some he gave grace to believe, and not unto others ? For only they unto whom it is given of God to believe do believe.

But how doth God give this gift unto us to believe in him ? Even by his Holy Spirit, therefore called ' the Spirit of faith,' 2 Cor. iv. 13, because God, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit worketh faith in us. But by what means doth he work faith in us ? Even by the hearing of the word preached, as it is written, Rom. x. 17, ' Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God ; ' where the holy apostle sheweth, that hearing of the word, even of the word of God, is that ordinary means whereby the Lord worketh faith in the hearts of his children. He blesseth and sanctifieth the hearing of his holy word unto them, and reacheth it unto their hearts by the finger of his Holy Spirit, and so they are begotten in

the faith of Christ Jesus. Thus, Lydia was brought unto the faith, as Luke witnesseth, Acts xvi. 14, where he saith, that ' the Lord opened her heart, so that she attended unto the things which Paul spake, and believed.' She heard the word, the Lord opened her heart, and she believed. And thus, three thousand souls were brought unto the faith in one day, of whom it is said, Acts ii. 37, that ' when they heard the word, they were pricked in their hearts, and believing they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? ' They heard the word, they were pricked in their hearts by the Spirit, they believed and were baptized. So that faith in Christ, ye see, is the gift of God, given by his Spirit through the hearing of the word preached. *Non omnibus, non enim omnium est fides, sed tantum electorum : unde dicitur fides electorum, et hic, vobis donatum est.* Not to all men, for all men have not faith : whence it is called, the faith of the elect ; and in this place, to you it is given.

Is, then, faith a gift of God by grace ? This may teach us that it is not in ourselves, or in our own power, to believe if we will, and when we will, neither that for any merit or worth of ours this gift is given unto us ; for if it be in ourselves to believe, how then is it the gift of God ? And if it be given us for our own merit, how then is it the gift of God by grace ? If it be given us, we have it but of him that giveth it, not of ourselves. If he give it of his own grace, it is ours ; but of his grace that giveth it, not of our merit to whom it is given. He must give it, or else we cannot have it, and therefore it is not of ourselves : and by grace it must be had, or else can never be had, and, therefore, not by our own merit. ' Every good giving is from above,' James i. 17, therefore faith is given of God ; therefore it is not in ourselves to believe if we will. And ' by the grace of God we are that we are,' 1 Cor. xv. 10 ; therefore faith, whereby we are the sons of God, is by grace, therefore not by any merit or worth of our own.

Again, is faith the gift of God ? This, then, may teach us to pour out our requests unto God, in prayer and supplication, for faith in Christ Jesus, for increase and confirmation of our faith in Christ Jesus. For if he give it, then we are by prayer to ask it of him, and so we shall receive it ; and if he give it by means, we are to pray unto him that he will so bless those means unto us, that thereby this gift may be given unto us. Let us, therefore, after the example of the father of the child in whom was the dumb spirit, go unto our God, and say unto him, ' Lord, I believe ; help my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24, help the wants and weakness of faith. And after the example of the apostles, ' Lord, increase our faith.' He giveth where it wanteth, he increaseth where it is, and he confirmeth where it is weak. Let us, therefore, by prayer go unto him, to have the wants of our faith supplied, the weakness of our faith strengthened, the less than grain-small littleness of our faith increased. He hath said, ' Ask, and ye shall

receive,' and he giveth liberally, and reproacheth no man. Let us, therefore, ask in prayer faith of him that giveth it, and assuredly he will give liberally, even that measure wherewith he will be pleased.

Again, doth God give faith by the hearing of the word preached? This, then, may teach us gladly to frequent those places where we may hear the word preached. His power, I know, is not limited to this means, but that he can (if he will) beget us in the faith without these means. But by this means he hath appointed to give this grace, and ordinarily he giveth this grace by these means. And yet how careless are we, too, too many of us, of using this means of hearing the word preached; as if either this gift of faith in Christ Jesus were not given by these means, or we esteemed not this gift, and so neglected these means, or were strong enough in the faith, and so needed not these means. Why should we love rather to sit reading in our houses, or drinking in our houses, or idle in our houses, or to be playing in the streets, or walking in the fields, or any otherwise occupied, than to come unto the house of the Lord, and to hear the word preached?

Now, the means of begetting and confirming us in the faith, are offered unto us. We know not, but the time may come, wherein we may think that the sparrows and swallows are happy, that have their nests by the altars of the Lord. Ye that gladly come unto the house of the Lord, and rejoice in the word of your salvation, comfort yourselves in that ye use the means whereby God hath appointed to beget you, and to confirm you in the faith of Christ Jesus, and assure yourselves of his blessing upon these means. As for the rest, that love darkness better than light, and under this or that pretence whatsoever will not come to hear the word preached, let them fear, for want of faith and a good conscience, in that day to hear the word, which will be too fearful for them to hear, 'Go, ye cursed,' &c. But I proceed to that which followeth.

The second thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith, it was given by grace unto the Philippians to suffer for Christ his sake; not simply to suffer, but to suffer for Christ his sake. Whence I observe, that persecution and suffering for Christ his sake is a gift of God by grace. And this our Saviour himself sheweth by those his words unto Peter, when he had cut off Malchus his ear, where he saith unto him, John xviii. 11, 'Put up thy sword: shall I not drink of the cup which my Father hath given me?' To suffer death was a cup which his Father had given him to drink, and should he refuse the gift of his Father? And thus it appeareth that the apostles thought, when they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ his name, Acts v. 41. This they thought was their glory, and a special gift of God by grace unto them, not communicated unto others, who could not endure any such sufferings for

Christ, but by a special gift given of God unto them; and therefore they rejoiced in their sufferings.

Now, here ye must understand that all sufferings are not sufferings for Christ his sake, and that all that say they suffer for Christ his sake do not suffer for Christ his sake, for such there are as suffer as evil doers; touching which sort of sufferers, the apostle exhorteth us, saying, 1 Peter iv. 15, 'Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.' And again, such there are as say they suffer for Christ his sake, and his truth's sake, when in truth they suffer for troubling the church with their heresies, as many heretics heretofore, and for treason against their prince and country, as some in our days. Know, therefore, that two things are required in him that suffereth for Christ his sake: the one is, that his adversaries persecute and trouble him, not as an evil doer, not for tumults in the church by schism or heresy, not for treason or any cause that is not good, but even because of his constant profession of Christ and of his truth. And, therefore, the sufferings of malefactors, of heretics, schismatics, traitors, or others that suffer for an evil cause, are no sufferings for Christ his sake. The other is, that with patience he suffer whatsoever he suffereth only for Christ and his truth's sake, without respect of shame, gain, glory, or any other like thing in the world. And therefore the sufferings of such as suffer, because they shame to be counted revolters and apostates, or because they desire to be honoured as martyrs, or in any like respects, are no sufferings for Christ his sake. To suffer, then, for Christ his sake, is with patience to endure mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonments, and death itself, even for his own sake, and for his truth's sake, and rather than we will depart from him, or prejudice his glory. And thus to suffer for Christ his sake is a singular gift of God by grace, as hath already been shewed; not the afflictions and persecutions themselves in themselves, but thus to suffer them.

Now the use which our apostle teacheth us to make hereof is this, not to fear the adversaries in any thing. For who would be afraid of a singular gift of God? Now to suffer for Christ his sake by the adversaries, is a singular gift of God. Let us not therefore in any thing fear our adversaries, but take good courage against them.

Again, this may serve to teach us what novices yet we are in the school of Christ; for how many of us esteem it a singular gift of God to suffer persecution for Christ his sake? Surely, if we had learned this lesson well, we had profited very well in the school of Christ. But when we are taught this lesson, what do many of us,—I hope not many here,—but in many places, what do many say within themselves? Surely I fear to remember what they say. But do they not say, I bid no such gifts; such gifts be far from me; let him

bestow such gifts on his dearest children, not on me ; and such other blasphemous speeches, which the godly may fear to hear or utter ? And indeed he giveth no such gifts to such. But let us know, that when we have well profited in the school of Christ, when we have well learned this lesson, that to suffer for Christ's sake is a singular gift of God, especially when we have so learned it, that when it comes to the practice, we can so account it.

Again, this may teach us that it is not in our own power or strength to suffer persecution for Christ his sake, but this must be given us of God. To will, to do, to believe, to suffer, all must be given of God : he must begin, and he must make an end ; he must be all in all, that he may have the glory of all. If Peter be left unto himself, a damsel shall be enough to terrify him, and to make him deny his Lord and Master. And therefore he can tell us out of his own experience, that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Peter i. 5. Whether therefore we believe, or suffer for Christ his sake, let us know that it is given us of God, and let him have all the glory of it.

Another thing yet I observe, in that the apostle saith, 'Unto you it is given not only to believe, but to suffer for Christ his sake ;' and that is, that to suffer for Christ his sake is an argument of faith, and a note of God's church and chosen children. For unto none is it given to suffer for Christ his sake, but unto whom it is first given to believe; and it is for him that is born after the flesh, to persecute him that is born after the Spirit, as it is written, Gal. iv. 29, 'As then he that was born after the flesh (speaking of Ishmael), persecuted him that was born after the Spirit (meaning Isaac), even so is it now.' All of them indeed strive not unto death, but most of them at one time or other are put to it, to take up their cross, and only they suffer for Christ his sake. For unto them it is given, and only to them, to suffer for his sake.

This, then, may teach us to brook the cross, when he layeth it upon us. For it is no strange thing that the cross be laid upon the children of the kingdom, and that their faith be tried by troubles. Nay, rather, it is strange if it be not so. And therefore the apostle saith, 1 Peter iv. 12, 'Dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is among you to prove you, as though some strange thing were come

unto you,' &c. If, therefore, if it be the will of God that we suffer for Christ his sake, let us cheerfully take up our cross and follow him, knowing that afflictions and sufferings are the marks of the Lord Jesus in our body, and that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we be able, &c. It followeth ;—

Having the same fight. This is the last motive or reason to persuade the Philippians in nothing to fear the adversaries, wherein he presseth them with his own example, that as they had seen him at Philippi, in nothing to fear the adversaries, and now heard that at Rome he feared them not, so they should in nothing fear the adversaries. But how saith the apostle that he had fought, and now did fight ? He fought and overcame, as Augustine saith, *non resistendo, sed patiendo* ; he changed no blows with the adversaries, but in his sufferings he was patient and constant, and neither for bonds, nor imprisonment, nor fear of death, shrunk from the profession of his hope. This was his fight, and thus he overcame.

Hence then (1.) I observe, that it is no light matter to endure the cross for Christ his sake, but it is a fight with the adversary, even a round trying of the mastery, who shall overcome. Now in this fight the field is won and the mastery got, if we patiently and constantly endure the cross. Let us therefore stand fast, that at the last we may say with the apostle, 'I have fought a good fight.'

(2.) Hence I observe, that the example of God's saints that have suffered before us, should encourage us gladly to suffer for Christ his sake. And therefore our Saviour encourageth his disciples against persecution thus, saying, 'So persecuted they the prophets which were before you ;' and again, 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before you ;' and again, 'Take the prophets,' saith James, 'for an example of suffering adversity, and of long patience.' As therefore we have the holy men of God for an example, let us gladly suffer for Christ his sake, and in nothing fear the adversaries.

(3.) Hence I observe, that the pastors ought to be unto their flocks examples, as of other good things, so of patience and constancy in suffering for Christ his sake.

(4.) That great and long crosses may lie upon them whom God loves most, as here on Paul, on the Israelites four hundred years in Egypt, on Abraham in his barrenness.

LAUS OMNIS SOLI DEO.

LECTURE XXIV.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any compassion and mercy, fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one judgment.—PHILIP. II. 1, 2.

THE apostle having in the former chapter exhorted the Philippians generally unto such a conversa-

tion as becometh the gospel of Christ, and having particularly instanced in some of those points wherein

such a conversation consisteth, now in this chapter he instanceth in some other points wherein such a conversation consisteth, as, namely, in concord, love, and humility, and most earnestly exhorteth the Philippians, and in them us, unto these most necessary virtues and graces of a Christian life and conversation. In the words I note, 1, the manner ; 2, the matter of the apostle's exhortation. The manner how the apostle exhorteth the Philippians is by way of request, as we say, for all the loves under heaven, in the first verse, in these words, 'If there be therefore,' &c., wherein the apostle coucheth four very pathetical arguments to persuade the things whereunto he exhorteth them are inferred, as we see, upon the words before. As if he should have said, Yourselves have seen what I suffered at Philippi for Christ his sake, what fighting I had there, and now ye hear what I suffer at Rome for Christ his sake, what fighting I have here, 'If therefore,' &c.

The first argument is, 'If there be any consolation in Christ,' that is, if by my ministry and apostleship ye have any comfort in Christ Jesus, then 'fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded,' &c. As if he should have said, Now shew whether ye have received any consolation in Christ Jesus by the work of my ministry. If ye have received any, let me have some back again from you, 'fulfil my joy,' &c.

The second argument is, 'If there be any comfort of love,' that is, if you so love me that ye desire any comfort in these my bands for the defence of the gospel, then 'fulfil my joy,' &c. As if he should have said, I love you from the very heart-root in Jesus Christ, now shew whether ye so love me that indeed ye desire my comfort in my bands and imprisonment. And if ye do so love me, then 'fulfil my joy,' &c.

The third argument is, 'If there be any fellowship of the Spirit,' that is, if ye be knit together in the bond of one spirit with me and amongst yourselves, then 'fulfil my joy,' &c. As if he should have said, Men that are knit together in the bond of one spirit are to give proof thereof by concord, love, and agreement among themselves; now, then, shew whether ye be knit together in the bonds of one spirit with me, and amongst yourselves, and if ye be knit together, then 'fulfil my joy,' &c.

The fourth argument is, 'if there be any compassion and mercy'; that is, if ye have any bowels of compassion to shew any mercy to me, the Lord his prisoner for your sake, then 'fulfil my joy,' &c. As if he should have said, Now shew what bowels of compassion there are in you, what mercy you have on me, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for your sake; and if there be any bowels of compassion in you, any mercy towards me, then 'fulfil my joy,' &c. What more pathetical to move, more forcible to persuade, than these arguments, so closely followed and so passionately urged? All such, and in such sort, pressed that the manner of

the apostle's exhortation could not be devised more effectual, to persuade the things which now his heart's desire was to persuade.

Now the matter of the apostle's exhortation is partly touching graces which he wisheth them to follow after, and partly touching faults which he wisheth them to be free from. The graces which he wisheth them to follow after in this second verse are set down first in general, and then in special. In general, he exhorteth them that they 'be like minded,' or as it is translated elsewhere, that they 'be like affectioned,' Rom. xii. 16, having their affections, likings, and desires set on the same things. Which his exhortation is not simply so that they be like minded, but with another prefixed motive, as I take it thereunto, 'fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded,' which is as if he should have said, I joy in the fellowship which ye have in the gospel from the first day unto now, I joy in your constant abiding in the truth in such assaults by the adversaries of the truth, I joy in your liberality sent unto me, whereby ye communicated to mine afflictions, I joy in very many mercies and graces of God bestowed upon you in Christ Jesus; but yet my joy is not full; so long as I hear of any contentions, emulations, and distractions among you, my joy is not full. 'If therefore there be any consolation in Christ, &c., fulfil my joy,' make full my joy; and so shall ye make full my joy if ye be like-minded, like affectioned one towards another. So that ye see the exhortation is not simply proposed, but with this motive prefixed thereunto, my joy is not full except ye be like-minded; fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded. This is the general virtue whereto he exhorteth them.

The special virtues comprised under this general, whereunto he exhorteth them, are,—1. That they have the same love, that is, that they love the same things in the Lord. 2. That they be of one accord, that is, that they agree in their wills and desires in the Lord. 3. That they be of one judgment, that is, that they agree in the doctrine and truth of Christ Jesus. These be the things which he wisheth to be in them, that their conversation may be such as becometh the gospel of Christ; in general, to be like affectioned in the Lord; in special, to love the same things in the Lord, to agree in their wills and desires in the Lord, to agree in the doctrine and truth of Christ Jesus. Now the faults which he wisheth them to be free from are contentions, vain-glory, and self-love, noted in the verses following, yet so that the counter-poison of humility is therein counter-balanced and persuaded, 'that nothing be done through contention,' &c. This I take to be the order and meaning of these words thus far. Now let us see what observations we may gather hence for our own farther use and instruction.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ Jesus. In this manner of the apostle's exhortation, 1. In general, I note the apostle's vehement obtestation of the Philippians for the embracing of concord, love,

and humility, that they may never fail from amongst them. He might, as he said to Philemon, verse 8, 'have commanded them in Christ that which were convenient.' Yet he rather beseecheth them, but that he doth indeed thoroughly, even for all the loves' sakes under heaven, if there be any consolation in Christ in them, any comfort of love in them, &c. Whence I observe in what manner the pastors ought to labour to repress such enormities amongst their people, as hinder the course of a Christian conversation. They are earnestly to beseech them, even as if they desired no other recompence of their labours and travels amongst them than this, that such and such contentions might be taken up, such and such disorders might be reformed, such and such Christian piety might be maintained. They are to remember that they are fathers to their flocks, as the apostle calleth himself, 1 Cor. iv. 15, and as John also implieth when he saith, 1 John ii. 1, 'my babes, little children,' &c., and therefore they are to deal with them as parents with their children. Now the father, if haply his children be at odds among themselves, what doth he? He calleth them unto him, he remembereth them what care he hath had over them, what cost he hath been at with them, what his love hath been towards them, what his desire hath been of their good, what honour, duty, reverence, and obedience they owe unto him, and at length entreateth them that if they have any care of these things, if they desire his comfort, if they will not bring his life down unto the dust with grief, they will be reconciled, and live together as brethren in unity. Even so pastors, which are spiritual fathers, when their people, their children, fall to inconveniences which any way breed offence, they are to remember them with what care they labour amongst them, how they long after their good from the very heart-root in Jesus Christ, what continual mention they make of them in their prayers unto the Lord. What honour, again, duty, reverence, and obedience they owe unto them, as unto them that watch for their souls, and at length earnestly to beseech them, that if they have any care of these things, if they desire his continuance with comfort amongst them, if they wish that he may give up his accounts for them in that day with joy and not with grief, then they will reform such and such disorders, live in such and such sort as becometh the gospel of Christ Jesus. Our apostle, dealing thus with the Philippians in this place, hath therein left a pattern for all pastors, that they should so deal with their people as they have him for example.

Here, it may be, you will say, that you could like this well, that in things convenient for you pastors would thus mildly deal with you, as parents with their children. But, forsooth, they will rather command as masters over servants, and oftentimes threaten the law; they will when things are amiss, and this ye cannot brook. Will ye then have us to beseech

you, and mildly to deal with you, as here the apostle dealt with the Philippians? If ye do not, it is because ye are not as were the Philippians. Be ye as were the Philippians generally, embrace the truth of Christ Jesus, be constant in the faith of Christ Jesus, be patient in afflictions for Christ Jesus his sake, communicate to the afflictions of the saints of Christ Jesus, love them that labour amongst you and are over you in the Lord, amongst many graces of the spirit let there be but some infirmities of the flesh, and see whether we will not beseech you, and deal with you as here the apostle dealt with these Philippians. But if ye be like unto the Galatians, unstable souls carried about with every wind of doctrine, corrupt in judgment, corrupt in manners, then ye may look for it, that as Paul sharply rebuked them, saying, Gal. iii. 1, 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?' so we will learn of him sharply to reprove you. This ye must know, that we may come unto you either with a rod or in love, and in the spirit of meekness, 1 Cor. iv. 21, that in Christ we may command you that which is convenient for you, even when for love's sake we rather beseech you, Philem. 8. If we come then unto you with a rod, or if we command you, we do that we may do, but ye drive us unto it by your inordinate ways, and dissolute lives, which as eankered sores need sharp corrosives. For this is a thing, ye hear, which we urge and press, that pastors are to labour to repress such enormities as arise amongst their people in the mildest sort that may be, earnestly beseeching them to reform such things as are amiss. And again, if we come unto you for love's sake beseeching you, we remit of that we may do, even because in all loving-kindness and meekness of the spirit we would reconcile you unto God, and join you unto the things that belong unto your peace. For therefore we beseech you, that by mildness we may prevail in that wherein of right we may command.

But this withal ye must note, that our beseeching of you is to be unto you as if we commanded you. For when the apostle saith, 2 Thes. ii. 1, 2, 'We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our assembling unto him, that ye be not suddenly moved from your mind,' &c., what else is his beseeching of the Thessalonians, but an adjuration of them, by these things, that they be not troubled about the day of the Lord his coming? And, not to stand upon many places, when our apostle here saith, 'If there be any consolation in Christ,' &c., what else is this but an adjuration of the Philippians, by these things, that they [be] like-minded, &c. Albeit, therefore, we are to remit of that which we may do, and of that which sometimes ye constrain us to do, and not to threaten or command, but only to beseech you in Christ Jesus, yet are ye to take our beseeching of you as a commandment unto you, even as a deep charge touching the things whereof we beseech you.

Let this, then, beloved, teach you how ye ought, for your parts, to carry yourselves towards your pastors and teachers. Are we in all mildness and meekness of spirit to deal with you, as parents with their children? Then are you in all obedience, as children, to hearken unto us as your fathers in Christ Jesus. Are we, for love's sake, to beseech you the things which in Christ we might command you? Then are ye, when we beseech you, to take it as if we commanded, as if we charged you, and more to be moved therewith than if we commanded, than if we charged you. Of many of you I am so persuaded that the pastor shall not be more ready to deal with you as a father, than ye will be ready to carry yourselves towards him as children, and that his beseeching of you shall be as if he commanded, as if he charged you. But for some, to what purpose is it to beseech them to reform anything that is amiss in them? Whether in Christ his stead we beseech them, or in his name we command them, or out of the law we threaten them, they will not come to hear us, they will none of our instructions. But I leave them unto him unto whom they stand or fall. And I beseech you, beloved, by the mercies of God, to continue in the grace wherein ye stand, rooted and built in Christ, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught in Christ Jesus. And let this suffice to be observed in general from the manner of the apostle's exhortation; whereby ye see the manner how pastors ought to labour to keep their people in holy duties, and to repress disorders amongst them, and that is, by beseeching them in all meekness of spirit, for all love's sake, to do that which is convenient.

Now, in particular, from so many arguments as are couched in the manner of the exhortation, may so many sundry observations be gathered. His first argument is, 'If there be any consolation in Christ; i. e. if ye have received any consolation by my ministry and apostleship, then fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded, &c. The ground of which argument is, that if the Philippians had received comfort in Christ by him, then ought they likewise at his request thus to comfort him as to be like-minded, &c. Whence I observe, that unto whom consolation in Christ is ministered, of him he that ministered it may require and look for the like again. For the general, it is so commonly held, that it is the saying of every man, that one good turn requires another, and a pleasure shewed requires the like again. And for the proof of this particular, that of the apostle is not impertinent, where he saith, 1 Cor. ix. 11, 'If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?' out of the general meaning whereof, this particular may not unfitly be gathered, that where spiritual consolation in Christ Jesus hath been bestowed, there, as other things, so comfort again, as it is required, may justly be expected.

Wretched, then, is that unthankfulness where hatred

is returned for good will, and where the comfort which was ministered was required with cause of heaviness. And yet what more common than such unthankfulness? The minister's labours for the consolation of his people in Christ Jesus, are in too, too many places required with too, too great cause of heaviness. Let the faithful minister now say unto him that hath received great comfort in Christ Jesus by his labours, If there be any consolation in Christ, if you have received any comfort in Christ Jesus by my ministry, let me beseech you that you set not your affections so much on things which are on the earth, that you will bridle your inordinate desires, which run too much after covetousness, that you will not lend your money upon usury, &c. And how seldom doth he receive this comfort from them again, thus to prevail with them? Nay, to his great grief he findeth that his words are not esteemed. Let it not be so with you, beloved, but by whose labours ye have received comfort in Christ Jesus, let them receive this comfort again from you, that their holy desires may prevail with you.

His second argument is, 'If there be any comfort of love,' that is, if ye so love me, that ye desire my comfort in my bonds for the defence of the gospel, then fulfil my joy, &c. The ground of which argument is, that if the Philippians loved him as he loved them, and in their love of him desired his comfort in his bonds, then they should fulfil his joy, &c. Whence I observe, that to yield unto the holy desires one of another, is an effectual token of Christian love in one towards another. 'If ye love me,' saith Christ, John xiv. 15, 'keep my commandments;' which place sheweth, that so we make proof of our love of God, if we conform ourselves in obedience to his commandments. But more direct to our very purpose is that of our apostle, where he saith to Philemon, 'If thou count our things common, receive him as myself,' Philem. 17. As if he should have said, Let this be a token of thy love towards me, and that thou countest all mine thine and thine mine, even to yield to my desire to receive Onesimus as myself.

This, then, in part sheweth why it is that we yield not to the holy desires of such as would gladly have comfort of our good, even for want of love of them. If sinners shall entice us, and say, 'Come with us, we will lay wait for blood, and lie privily for the innocent, without a cause, we will swallow them up alive like a grave, even whole, as those that go down to the pit,' &c., Prov. i. 10-12; we are ready enough to yield ourselves unto their wills, and to run as fast as they for their lives unto mischief. But let the pastor say to his people, If ye so love me that ye desire my comfort, profane not the Lord his Sabbaths, break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by mercy towards the poor; or the father to the child, If thou so love me that thou desire my comfort, refrain thy feet from every evil path, and walk in the

ways of the Lord ; or the friend unto his friend, If thou so love me that thou desiro my comfort, bridle thine inordinate desires, fly from that which is evil, and do that is good ; what cares the people for the comfort of their pastor in this case, or the child for the comfort of his father, or the friend for the comfort of his friend ? Will any of them, for the love of them, that they may be comforted by them, yield unto their holy desire ? Nay, we love them not so ; but whatsoever become of their comfort, we will follow our own ways. If it be so with us, this is verily a fault amongst us, and let us hereafter love the godly, whatsoever be their place, that we make reckoning of their comfort, and, in token thereof, let us hearken to such holy advice as they give us.

His third argument is, 'If there be any fellowship of the spirit ;' that is, if ye be knit together in the bond of one spirit, and have fellowship one with another, as members of one body, under one head, then fulfil my joy, &c. The ground of which argument is, that men knit together in the bond of one spirit, are to give proof thereof by concord, love, and agreement amongst themselves. Whence I observe, that we are to give proof of being knit together in the bond of one spirit by the bond of peace, concord, and love amongst ourselves. Thus, where it is said in the Acts, of such as were brought to the faith through the apostles' preaching, that they believed and were baptized, as a token and proof that they were all baptized into one spirit, it is also said that they continued together with one accord, that they were of one heart and of one soul. 'All that believed,' saith Luke, Acts ii. 46, 'were in one place, and had all things common. And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every one had need. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple,' &c. All which things are set down as tokens and proofs that they were all baptized into one spirit. And again, 'The whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul ;' that is, of one mind, will, consent, and affection, whereby they shewed indeed that they were knit together in one spirit, and had fellowship one with another as members of one head, and therein left us an example how we should shew that we are so knit, that we have such fellowship.

What proof, then, we give that we are knit together in one spirit, and have fellowship one with another, as members of one body, let our contentions, discords, and divisions, witness unto the world. Indeed, they do too, too plainly witness unto our faces that herein we are carnal, and walk not as they that are knit together in the fellowship of the Spirit. But the words following will give us further occasion to speak of this point.

His fourth argument is, 'If there be any compassion and mercy ;' that is, if ye have any bowels of compassion to shew any mercy unto me, the Lord his

prisoner for your sake, 'fulfil my joy,' &c. The ground of which argument is, that in mercy and compassion towards him, the Lord his prisoner for their sake, they should at his request fulfil his joy, to be like, &c. Whence I observe, that the godly requests of God's saints afflicted for Christ his sake, should move in us such bowels of compassion as that we should gladly hearken and yield unto them. Hereupon our apostle, before divers exhortations and requests which he maketh in his epistles, prefixeth this, that he was prisoner in the Lord, prisoner of Jesus Christ : 'I therefore being prisoner in the Lord,' saith he, Eph. iv. 1, 'pray you that ye walk worthy of that vocation whereto ye are called.' Where, in that he saith, 'I being prisoner in the Lord,' he thereby implieth, that they were the rather to hearken unto his exhortation, because it was the exhortation of him that was prisoner for the Lord his cause. And so he beginneth his epistle to Philemon thus, 'Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' implying that Philemon was the rather to hearken and to yield to his request for his servant Onesimus, because it was the request of him that was now prisoner for Jesus Christ. I omit other places. By these ye see how powerful and effectual the godly requests of God's afflicted members ought to be with us.

And it were well that in all places they were so powerful and effectual as to stir up the very bowels of compassion towards them. But are not many in many places rather ready to add affliction unto their bonds ? Would it not now be enough to reject the requests, were they never so godly, if they should come in the name of the prisoner of the Lord : I the prisoner of the Lord, pray you that ye reform the wickedness of your ways ? Indeed, we may well wish in our days that, enjoying our liberty, we may beseech you in Christ his stead ; for I fear that if out of our prisons and bonds we should thus write unto you, If there be any compassion and mercy in you towards me the Lord his prisoner, hearken unto me in this, that ye be like-minded, or the like ; I say, I fear me the mention of our bonds would not much prevail with you, or move any bowels of compassion in you. Well, howsoever it would, it should, and I hope it will in all that belong to Christ Jesus. And let this suffice to be observed from the several arguments couched in the manner of the apostle's exhortation.

Now followeth the matter of the apostle's exhortation, which is this in general, that they be like-minded. Which is not simply proposed, but with this motivo prefixed thereunto, My joy, though for great cause it be great, yet is not full, unless ye be like-minded : 'Fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded.' Whence I observe, first, that the godly pastor's joy is to be in the weal of his people, whatsoever his own case be. If himself be, as Paul here was, close in prison, bound with chains, and look for nothing but sentence of death, yet if his people be well, if they stand fast in

the faith, he is to be glad, and rejoice even in his bonds. When our apostle wrote to Philemon, he was in prison, as even now we heard ; yet saith he to him, ‘ we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because by thee the saints’ hearts are comforted.’ So, how hard soever the pastor’s own case be, yet, if he be a good one, he hath great joy and consolation in his people’s weal.

But too, too many pastors we have in our day, which, if themselves be well, care not in what case their people be. If they have the fleece from them, their hearts are glad, whatsoever become of them. But such rejoicing is not good, and shall be bitterness in the end.

2. Hence I observe, that the good pastor’s joy is not to be full so long as anything is amiss amongst his people. We shall not now need other proof than this of our apostle in this place. The Philippians had embraced the faith of Jesus Christ ; they abounded in knowledge and in judgment ; they stood fast in the faith, notwithstanding their assaults by false apostles ; they were careful over him, and communicated to his afflictions ; they were excellent in many graces : so

that our apostle had great cause to have great joy over them. But because of some contention and vain glory amongst them, his joy was not full ; a sufficient precedent for the pastor, that he count not his joy full so long as anything is amiss amongst his people.

Which may serve to admonish the pastor, to labour that nothing may be amiss amongst his people, either touching life or doctrine, that so his joy may be full, and that his people may be the crown of his rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. But I come unto that which the apostle exhorteth in general.

The thing which the apostle exhorteth the Philippians in general is, that they be like-minded ; that is, like affectioned, having their affections, likings, and desires set on the same things : an evident argument that they were not like minded, as also the rest which followeth is, that some things were amiss amongst them. And in that he dealeth so earnestly with them that these things might be amended in them, it sheweth that these are things which are carefully to be procured, regarded, and maintained.

LECTURE XXV.

That ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one judgment ; that nothing be done through contention, &c.—PHILIP. II. 2.

WE have heard the manner of the apostle’s exhortation, and therein four very pathetical arguments couched, to persuade the things whereunto he exhorteth, all so closely followed, and so passionately urged, as that the manner of the exhortation could not be devised more effectual to persuade the things whereunto he exhorteth, ‘ If there be,’ &c. It remained to speak of the matter of the apostle’s exhortation. We spake only of that which I took to be only a motive prefixed before the matter of the exhortation, in these words, ‘ Fulfil my joy.’ Now we are to proceed unto the main matter of the apostle’s exhortation, which is, that ‘ they be like-minded, having the same love,’ &c. By which matter of the exhortation this in general appeareth, that some things were amiss amongst them ; there was not that love and concord amongst them, nor that humility which should be in them. Many things were done amongst them through contention, through vain glory, through self-seeking of their own things, so that though many things were to be much commended in them, yet were some things likewise to be reformed in them, which hindered the course of that Christian conversation which becometh the gospel of Christ Jesus.

Whence I observe in general, what the state even of the best reformed churches, and so of the most holy men, is. No church so reformed, no men so sanctified, but that many things are amiss amongst

them ; though many things be much to be commended in them, yet some things likewise are still to be reformed in them. Look into all those churches unto which our apostle wrote his epistles : ye shall not find any of them so commanded for embracing the truth, and for standing fast in the truth, as this church of Philippi. He giveth, indeed, testimony unto the Galatians, that they were sometimes such as (if it had been possible) would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them unto him, so loved they him and the truth which he taught. But quickly were they removed to another gospel, as the apostle witnesseth, Gal. i. 6, whereas the Philippians still stood so fast that the apostle was persuaded that he that had begun that good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Yet here ye see that some things were amiss amongst them. Again, look into those seven churches, unto which John writeth in the Apocalypse, and there ye shall see that some were fallen, others decayed, some were proud, others negligent. Of all the rest of those churches, the church of Smyrna and the church of Philadelphia are there most commended. Yet in both those churches, by the right understanding of those epistles that were written to them, it will appear that there were some amongst them who professed themselves to be good Christians, whereas indeed they were no better than a synagogue and sink of Satan. Again, look into the

reformed churches ever since that time unto this day, and at this day, and still ye shall see that, as in those seven churches of Asia, so in these, there were and are, as many things to be commended, so likewise many things to be reprehended. And so long as the church is militant upon earth, it cannot be but that she should be black; black, I say, not only in respect of her afflictions, whereby her beloved doth sometimes prove her, and sometimes chastise her, but black also in respect of her blemishes, imperfections, and sins, which are the causes of her afflictions. For all men, while they carry about with them the earthly house of this tabernacle, unto what degree of perfection in faith, knowledge, or other graces of the Spirit soever they be grown, had still need to pray, ‘O Lord, increase our faith,’ our knowledge, &c.; and unto what perfection in innocence, obedience, or the like they be grown, yet still they are taught to pray, O Lord, ‘forgive us our debts and trespasses.’ For here ‘we know in part,’ we believe in part, we love in part, we obey in part, and our greatest perfection is but great imperfection, ‘whiles we live here at home in the body,’ as that of the apostle sheweth, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. And so long as we are clothed with corruption, ‘if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and truth is not in us,’ 1 John i. 8. That which is in part either in knowledge, or in love, or in obedience, or in the like graces of the Spirit, shall be abolished, our imperfections shall be taken away, and we shall be made perfect. But where and when? Not here otherwise than by imputation, but then and there, when and where ‘corruption shall put on incorruption, and mortality shall put on immortality,’ as the former place to the Corinthians sheweth, ver. 10; and the church shall be presented unto Christ Jesns, her beloved, ‘not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,’ but pure, and holy, and without blame; but then, when she shall be made glorious, when her ‘vile body shall be changed, and be fashioned like unto his glorious body,’ as that place to the Ephesians sheweth, Eph. v. 27.

This, then, should teach us to long to be of that triumphant church, to long to enter into the holiest of holies, to long to be loosed, and to be with Christ. Here the father of the faithful, holy Abraham; here the man after God’s own heart, holy David; here that upright and just man, holy Job; here that chosen vessel to bear Christ his name before the Gentiles, our holy apostle, shall have their faults and their falls. Here Abraham and Lot will be sometimes at variance; here Paul and Barnabas will sometimes not be of one accord; here Paul and Peter will sometimes not be of one judgment; here we shall have our falls, we shall have our imperfections, whatsoever we be. Only in the city which is above shall all tears be wiped from our eyes, all wants supplied, all imperfections perfected, all sin cease, and all enemies be utterly destroyed; only there our knowledge, our judgment,

our love, our peace, our joy shall be perfect. How shold we not long, then, to remove out of the body, and to dwell with the Lord? And yet so earthly-minded are we, many of us, that here we could be content to pitch our tabernacles, and never to remove hence, even as if we loved darkness better than light, and had rather dwell in the valley of tears than in the valley of blessing, where we are but strangers, than at home in our own city. Let us, beloved, remember that here the best of us have our blemishes, and that when it is at the best with us, we are but in the way unto that which is best of all for us; that the best reformed church on earth is not thoroughly reformed, and that the most sanctified man on earth is but only in part sanctified. And let us make this benefit hereof, daily more and more to grow out of love with this life, and in love with that life in which there shall be no more death; daily more and more to wean ourselves from the vanities of Jerusalem which is on earth, where many things will be done through contention and vain glory, and to have our conversation in heaven, where we shall all be like-minded, having the same mind, and being of one accord, and of one judgment. And let this suffice to be observed in general from the matter of the apostle’s exhortation, whereby ye see the state even of the best reformed churches, and so of the most holy men, and what use is to be made of the imperfections which follow the most perfect in this life. Now let us come unto the several points whereunto the apostle exhorteth the Philippians, and in them us.

The first thing whereunto he exhorteth them is, in general, that they be ‘like-minded,’ or ‘like affectioned,’ as the same phrase is translated elsewhere, Rom. xii. 16, having their affections, likings, and desires set on the same things; for in this, as in the general, are comprised, as I take it, those particulars which follow in this verse. So that when he exhorteth them to ‘be like-minded,’ it is in general that their affections be set on the same things, loving the same things, according in desire of the same things, and according in judgment of the same things, but all in the Lord. Whence I observe, a necessary duty in all Christians called to the knowledge of God by the gospel of Christ Jesus, which is that they be ‘like-minded in the Lord,’ setting their affections, likings, and desires on the same things in the Lord; a duty which our apostle prescribeth almost as oft as any other duty. In the beginning of his former to the Corinthians, chap. i. 10, he ‘beseecheth them by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak one thing, and that they be knit together in one mind, and in one judgment.’ Where ye see he beseecheth them, and in them us, even ‘by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ to be all of one mind; and because disagreeing in words engendereth dissension of mind, therefore that we may the rather be all of one mind, he beseecheth us all to speak one thing. In the end,

likewise, of his latter to the Corinthians, chap. xiii. 11, he commendeth this duty unto them, saying, ‘Finally, brethren, fare ye well. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind ;’ as thinking this duty so necessary, that both in the beginning, and in the end, and at all times, they were to be put in mind of it. In this place, likewise, ye see how roundly and deeply he adjureth and chargeth the Philippians, and in them us, to be like-minded, saying, ‘If there be any consolation in Christ,’ &c., ‘fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded.’ And in the last chapter save one to the Romans, he maketh a most earnest prayer unto God for them, that they might be like-minded one towards another, saying, Rom. xv. 5, ‘Now the God of patience and consolation give you that ye be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus ; that ye may with one mind and with one mouth praise God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Where first the apostle implieth that, if they be like-minded, God must give them this to be like-minded, and therefore he prayeth unto God to give them this grace, that they be like-minded one towards another ; secondly, he noteth how he would have both them and us to be like-minded one towards another, viz., according to Christ Jesus, to consent in that truth which he hath taught, and in that love which he hath commanded ; for otherwise, if we be like-minded, but not according to Christ Jesus, not in the Lord, what great thing do we do ? Are not the Jews like-minded among themselves, the Turks amongst themselves, the adversaries of the truth amongst themselves ? Were not the priests, scribes, and pharisees of one mind when they condemned the innocent blood, and the whole multitude of the Jews, when they cried all at once, saying, ‘Crucify him, crucify him, away with him, and deliver unto us Barabbas’ ? And are not they all of one mind that cast their heads together with one consent, and consult to work wickedness in what kind soever it be ? And to consent and be like-minded in these and the like things, is it not rather a conspiracy than an unity ? We are not then only to be like-minded, but to be ‘like-minded in the Lord,’ to be ‘like minded according to Christ Jesus ;’ and, lastly, the apostle sheweth to what end he would have us to be like-minded, namely, ‘that with one mind and one mouth we may praise God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ :’ not only with one mind, but also with one mouth ; nor only with one mouth, but also with one mind. Thus, then, ye see it to be a duty so necessary in us and in all Christians that we be like-minded in the Lord, that the apostle still commendeth it unto us, beseeching us to be like-minded, charging and adjuring us to be like-minded, and praying unto God that we be like-minded.

But why is it so necessary a duty that we be like-minded in the Lord ? Many reasons might be alleged, but I will only mention two. As, first, because ‘we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and

Father of us all ;’ for meet it is that so many as are joined together in the unity of these, be also knit together in one mind, and in one judgment according to Christ Jesus, even as our apostle urgeth this same reason to this same purpose elsewhere, Eph. iv. 5. Secondly, because there is not a better remedy against dissensions and schisms than to be like-minded in the Lord, as without which it cannot be but that there be dissensions and schisms. For what was the cause of the dissensions and contentions wherewith the church of Corinth was troubled ? Was it not because they were not like-minded in the Lord ? One held of Paul, another of Apollos, one of Cephas, another of Christ ; one would pray and prophesy bare-headed, another with his head covered, and when they came unto the Lord his supper, one was hungry, and another was drunken. And how can it be but that there should be dissensions and contentions, when one likes this and another that, one would have this and another that, one draws this way and another that way ? In a little house, ye know, if the husband be of one mind and the wife of another, the parents of one mind and the children of another, the master of one mind and the servants of another, and every of them will needs follow their own mind, and fancy their own way, how troubled must needs that house be ? And therefore our blessed Saviour, being now ready to be offered, in that holy prayer for all his children, prayed, John xvii. 21, that we ‘might be all one, even as he and the Father were one ;’ that we might all be one in the Father and in him, even that we might be like-minded in the Lord. And in the next chapter, Philip. iii. 16, our apostle prescribeth it as a remedy against dissensions in the church, to proceed by one rule, and to mind one thing. If, then, we will walk as becometh the gospel of Christ, we are not only to be joined in one faith, and one hope, but in all things we are to be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, we are to love and like, affect and fancy, will and desire the same things as they are pleasing unto the Lord ; being at one with God, we are to be of one mind amongst ourselves.

Here, then, our adversaries will ask of us, if this be so necessary a duty, how happens it that ye are not all like-minded ? What mean the terms of Zwinglians, Lutherans, Calvinists amongst you ?* How is it that amongst you some are Brownists, some Baroists, some Puritans, some Protestants ? How is it that, touching ceremonies, touching discipline, and the like, there is such difference amongst you ? Doth not these things plainly argue that ye are not like-minded amongst yourselves ? For answer whereunto, I, of them that ask us these questions I demand of them the like ; are they all like-minded ? What mean then the terms of Thomists, Scotists, Ockamists, Canonists, and Divines amongst them ?† How is it that amongst them some are White, some Black, some

* Bezd. epist.

† Vide Par. in Iren. cap. 26.

Grey Friars, some Franciscans, some Dominicans, some Jesuits, some barely priests? How is it that, not touching ceremonies, or discipline alone, but touching main and great points of doctrine, there is such difference amongst them? Touching the Scriptures, doth not Arius Montanus say, that the books of the Old Testament not found in the Hebrew Canon are Apocryphal; and doth not Bellarmine deny it? Doth not Canus say, that the Hebrew text is wholly corrupt by the malice of the Jews; and doth not Bellarmine deny it? Doth not Bellarmine himself, for expounding of the Scriptures, sometimes refer us to the fathers of the church, sometimes to general councils, sometimes to the pope and cardinals, sometimes to the pope himself? It would be too long to run through the rest of many points of doctrine wherein they dissent among themselves. They need no other to note this unto the whole world than Bellarmine himself, who, in the beginning of the discussing of every controversy betwixt us and them, sheweth how not only we dissent therein from them, but how they dissent amongst themselves. First, therefore, let them pluck out the beam of their own eye, that so they may see clearly the mote which is in our eye; let them clear the point that they are like-minded amongst themselves, and then let them tell us that we are not all of one mind.

But how do they shew that we are not all of one mind? If ye be, say they, then what mean the terms of Zwinglians, Lutherans, Calvinists amongst you? But I say unto them, what do they mean to note us by such terms? The memories of these men we honour and reverence, as also we do other notable lights which have been in the church, and are at this day. But if we be named after any other name than only the name of Christ Jesus, it is through their malice, not by our desire. Yea, but how is it, say they, that some amongst you are Brownists, some Baroists, some Puritans, some Protestants; that, touching ceremonies and outward discipline, there is such difference amongst you? I answer that, if there be any Brownists or Baroists amongst us, we hold them not to be of us, and therefore their distraction from us ought not to be objected unto us. Now, for our difference about ceremonies and outward discipline, I wish we were all like-minded in these things; and it is a fault and blemish of some in our church, that we are not like-minded in these things. But for the substance of doctrine and grounds of religion, wherein is it that we are not like-minded? If they could, no doubt they would tax us in the substance as they do in the accident; and as they cannot in the substance, so I wish they could not tax us in the accident. So should the joy of our Sion be full, if we were all like-minded, both for the substance and for the accident, and so many as love the peace of Sion, and wish her prosperity, pray also that this her joy may be fulfilled.

Again, this may serve to reprove a fault too, too common amongst us. For if we be joined together in one faith and in one hope, if we agree in the substance of truth, we think it a small matter to dissent amongst ourselves about smaller matters. And, indeed, it is the less matter. But yet it is a thing which we ought to labour, even to be like-minded in the Lord in all things, which our apostle sufficiently sheweth, when, in his exhortations unto us to be like-minded, he doth not limit us unto these or these things, but, indefinitely, he would have us to be like-minded, according to Christ Jesns. In matters of faith and in matters of ceremony, in matters of doctrine and in matters of discipline, in matters of life and in matters of learning, in matters of religion and in matters of civil conversation, he would have us to be like-minded, as in the Lord it may be warranted. Let us, therefore, beware how we soothe up ourselves in dissenting about matters of less moment, when we agree in matters of greater importance. The more like-minded we are in the Lord, the more is our conversation such as becometh the gospel of Christ. Let our care, therefore be, that both in matters of less moment, and likewise in matters of greater importance, we may be like-minded in the Lord, as becometh the gospel of Christ.

But how may we be like-minded in the Lord? This our apostle sheweth in the next words, and that is, 1, if we have the same love, *i.e.* if we love the same things in the Lord; 2, if we be of one accord, *i.e.* if we agree in our wills and desires in the Lord; and, 3, if we be of one judgment, *i.e.* if we agree in one truth of Christ Jesus. For these the particulars are, as I take it, comprised under, and meant in that general, so that, if we thus love and agree in the Lord, then are we like-minded in the Lord, and our conversation, in a great part, is such as becometh the gospel of Christ. Because I have stood long upon the general, I shall the less need to stand upon these particulars, which, in effect, have been handled in the general. Briefly, therefore, of these, as time will give leave.

The first thing, then, which in these particulars I note is, that the apostle would have them to have the same love, the same, I say, in respect of the object; that they should love the same things, the same church, the same gospel, the same truth, even as we say that they have the same faith who believe in the same Christ. Hence, then, I observe, that if we will be like-minded, and walk as becometh the gospel of Christ, then must we love the same things in the Lord, not one one thing and another another thing, but the same things as simply the same things. For we may love the same things, and yet be far from that love of the same things which becometh us, as, namely, if we love the same delights of the flesh, the same sins or corruptions whatsoever, but the same things in the Lord, and in the love whereof he is delighted and well

pleased. Thus it is commanded us everywhere in the book of God, that we all love the same God, the same truth, the same means of our salvation in Christ, and generally, the same things, whatsoever they be, that belong unto our peace. And the reason of it is plain. For where one loves one thing, and another another thing, as, for example, one Christ and another anti-christ, when one hateth that which another loveth, where every man loves that which himself liketh, and scarce two love the same things, what love can there be, nay, what distractions must there not needs be, nay, what desolations are not likely to ensue? In the church of Corinth, they loved not the same things, but one loved this man, another that man; and what dissensions bred it in that church! In our neighbour kingdom of France, they love not the same things, but one sort love the light of the word, another sort love darkness better than light; and what blood hath it shed in that kingdom! Amongst ourselves we love not the same things in the Lord, but one sort love their pleasures, another sort their profits, another sort their promotions, the fewest sort the things that they should love; and what but a judgment likely to ensue!

Nay, beloved, here is the misery, and like to be the ruin, of our land: in our land, we love not the same things in the Lord, but we love, too many of us, that man of sin, and the poisoned cups of the fornications of that whore, and too few of us the simplicity of the truth of Christ Jesus. To speak plainly, we love too many of us the pope and his merchandise, and too few of us Christ and his truth. We speak not the language of Canaan, but half in the speech of Ashdod, and half in the language of Canaan. Herupon it is that the pope and his adherents conceive courage against us to subdue us and our land, and to make us a prey unto their teeth.

Beloved, if we will not for the love of the Lord, and because the Holy Ghost hath commanded us, yet for the love of our own lives, and that we be not made a prey unto our enemies, let us love the same truth of Christ Jesus, and generally the same things in the Lord. Let us no longer halt between God and Baal, Christ and antichrist, religion and superstition, but with religious hearts let us love the same truth, the same God, the same things in the Lord, that some may be like-minded according to Christ Jesus.

The *second* thing which, in these particulars, I note is, that the apostle would have the Philippians to be of one accord, *i.e.* to agree in their wills and desires touching everything that is good, belong it unto religion or unto civil life and conversation. Whence I observe another necessary duty for us, that we be like-minded, and walk as becometh the gospel of Christ; and that is, that we agree in our wills and desires in the Lord, that unity and concord amongst us be preserved and maintained. To agree in mischief we are ready

enough, neither need we any to move us thereunto; for, as it is in the prophet, Ps. l. 18, 'If we see a thief, we consent unto him, and we are partakers with the adulterers; we run with the wicked to do evil, and we easily join hands with the wicked and ungodly.' But to be of one accord in the Lord, we are not so easily drawn; albeit this be the agreement that the Holy Ghost requireth of us, and commendeth unto us: 'Behold,' saith the prophet, Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 'How good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity,' *i.e.* to live together in that concord and good agreement which is acceptable to the Lord. And the more to shew the precious worth of holy agreement amongst the sons of God, he likeneth it unto the ointment prescribed for Aaron, which was so sweet that when Aaron was anointed therewith, the smell of it was most pleasant unto all that were by, Exod. xxx. 23. And even so sweet and pleasant a thing it is to see brethren to be of one accord in the Lord. This is that which is commanded in the faithful in the Acts, chap. iv. 32, that 'they were of one heart and of one soul,' agreeing in their minds, wills, desires, and affections. And where this agreement in the Lord is not, there the Lord is not.

And yet in matters wherein we differ one from another, how hardly are we brought to be of one accord in the Lord! If we differ in matters of religion, either we will not vouchsafe one to talk with another in them, or, if we do, we will be sure to set that down with ourselves, that howsoever we be convinced, yet we will never yield to agree with them that would persuade us. We have too, too lamentable experience of it. For when we talk with them that are popishly affected, though they be convinced, yet will they not yield to agree with us. Likewise, if we differ in matters of civil life, how hardly are we brought one to yield unto another, and all to agree on that which is most evidently good! Nay, if we have once taken a stitch against it, we will never agree to it, whatsoever come of it. But, beloved, this becometh not the gospel of Christ. If we will walk worthy of Christ, let us be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord.

The *third* thing which I note is, that the apostle would have them to be of one judgment, *i.e.* to agree in one truth of Christ Jesus. Whence I observe a threefold necessary duty for us, 'that we be like-minded, and walk as becometh the gospel of Christ,' and that is, that we agree in one truth of Christ Jesus, even in that truth which the prophets and apostles have taught us. All agreement without this is but disagreement. This alone knits the knot of good agreement. Let our adversaries look how they agree in this, in those manifold positions which they maintain besides, and repugnant unto this.

LECTURE XXVI.

That nothing be done through contention or vain-glory; but that in meekness of mind every man esteem other better than himself. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of other men.—PHILIP. II. 3, 4.

IT remaineth now that we speak of those unchristian vices which the apostle dissuadeth, as the very bane of that love, concord, and unanimity, which before he had persuaded, in these words, ‘That nothing be done through contention,’ &c.

That nothing be done, &c. In these words, then, the apostle amplifieth his exhortation, 1, by two evils which he dissuadeth, as the very bane of that love, concord, and unanimity, which before he had persuaded, namely, contention and vain-glory, ‘That nothing,’ &c. 2. By the contrary virtue unto them, which he persuadeth as the very foster-mother of that love, concord, and unanimity, which before he had persuaded, namely, humility, ‘but in meekness of mind;’ amplified also by the definition thereof, which is, that it is a virtue whereby one man esteemeth another better than himself. So that here is both a dehortation and an exhortation: a dehortation from contention and vain-glory, ‘That nothing be done,’ &c.; an exhortation unto humility and meekness of mind, ‘but in meekness of mind,’ &c. So also in the next verse is, first, an evil dissuaded; secondly, the contrary virtue persnaded: a dehortation and an exhortation. A dehortation from self-seeking of our own things, which also is an enemy unto that love, concord, and unanimity, which before he had persuaded, in these words, ‘Look not,’ &c. An exhortation unto a regard of other men’s things, a means of preserving that love, concord, and unanimity, which before he had persuaded, in these words, ‘but every man also on,’ &c. So that here are three breeders and causes of discord and dissension dissuaded, viz., contention, vain-glory, and self-seeking of our own things; and two preservers of love and concord persuaded, viz., humility and due regard of others: the one dissuaded and the other persuaded, that love, concord, and unanimity, may be maintained. This of the order and meaning of the words in general.

Now for the more particular opening of the meaning of them; the words, ye see, in themselves are unperfect, and do thus depend upon the former: ‘Fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one judgment.’ Why? ‘That nothing be done through contention and vain-glory.’ As if he should have said, If there be among you contention and vain-glory, it is not possible that you should be like-minded, ‘having the same love, being of one accord,’ &c. For these are the very fire-brands of discords and dissension, and the very bane of concord and love. So then shall ye be like-minded, to love the same things, to agree on the same

things, to be of one judgment touching the truth, if ye mortify, if ye kill and crucify these earthly and vile affections of contention and vain-glory: ‘That nothing be done amongst you through contention and vain-glory; but that in meekness,’ &c. Now, by contention, the apostle meaneth a delight to differ from other men in judgment and in every other thing, and by vain-glory he meaneth a tickling desire to get glory by following after singularity in things. So that when the apostle would have nothing done through contention, his meaning is, that he would have none of them to take a delight in dissenting from other men; but when they think the truth, to be like minded unto them. And when he would have nothing done through vain-glory, his meaning is, that he would have none of them to be tickled with such a desire of glory, as to single out himself in judgment from the rest, and to disdain to think as the rest do, think they never so well. The rest that followeth is more easy to be understood, and may further be opened as we come to the several points. Now let us see what observations we may gather hence for our further use and instruction.

The first thing which here I note, is, that the apostle would have nothing done among the Philippians through contention; he would have none of them to take delight in dissenting from other men in judgment, or in any other thing; he would have none of them to be contentious persons, such as cannot abide to agree with others, though they be in the right, such as are never well but when they are in opposition, in contradiction. Whence I observe, that amongst Christians called to the knowledge of God by the gospel of Christ, all contention should be abandoned, nothing should be done amongst them through contention, they shold take no pleasure in dissenting from other men, either in judgment or in any other thing. This our apostle plainly sheweth, where he saith, first, that contentions are a work of the flesh, and then, that ‘they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and the lusts,’ Gal. v. 20, 24. Lay, then, these together thus: ‘They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and the lusts,’ so that they do not serve sin in the lusts thereof; but contentions are an affection and lust of the flesh, reckoned up with adultery, fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, heresies, murders, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like. What, then, must needs follow, but that they that belong unto Christ must abandon all contentions, must do nothing upon a humour to thwart and to cross, upon a delight to

dissent and to differ. And the reason hereof is very plain; for when men once grow to that, that they take a delight and pleasure in crossing and thwarting other men, and in opposing themselves unto whatsoever they say, be the thing never so clear, never so true, how can they, as becometh Christians, be of one accord with others? Nay, how can it be, but that such opposition and contradiction should breed great discord and dissension? It is one of Solomon's proverbs, chap. xxvi. 21, 'As the coal maketh burning coals, and wood a fire, so the contentious man is apt to kindle strife.' Whence it is clear, that contention is as fit to stir up strife as coal and wood to make a fire. Look into the church, the schisms and heresies, the broils and stirs wherewith the church at all times is troubled, whence are they? Are they not commonly from men of contentious humours, which take a pleasure in dissenting from the rest of the church, and in maintaining new and quaint opinions by the sharpness of their wits? Arius, Nestorius, Macedonius, and many other the like, by whose heresies the church hath heretofore been troubled, were they not such men? And what are they that endanger the peace of the church in our day? Are they not such men? Again, look into the commonwealth, the divisions and discords, the tumults and brabbles, wherewith all societies and bodies are troubled, whence are they? Are they not commonly from contentious men, which love to say and do otherwise than the rest? Experience hath so tried it, that it will not be denied; so that ye see there is great reason of abandoning all contentions among Christians, that nothing be done through contention amongst them.

What, then, may nothing be done through contention? If four hundred false prophets counsel Ahab to go to war, may not Micaiah set himself against them all, and tell Ahab, that if he go he shall fall there? 2 Chron. xviii. May not Jeremiah contend and strive even with the whole earth, as himself witnesseth that he did? Indeed, if Micaiah or Jeremiah do so, they shall be counted contentious men for their pains, insomuch that Jeremiah shall cry out and say, 'Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a contentious man, and a man that striveth with the whole earth,' Jer. xv. 10, for so he was accounted. And so our whole church, for dissenting from the Romish Church, we are counted schismatical, heretical, contentious men. But ye must know that there is a great difference betwixt *δοξιμασία* and *εἰδοςία*, betwixt a due examination and a perverse opposition, betwixt dissenting from others and a delight to dissent from others, betwixt dissenting from others to maintain a truth, and a dissenting from others only to contradict, whether the thing be true or false. We may not (as our apostle here saith) do any thing through contention, but we may and most duly examine things that are called into question. We may not take a delight in dissenting from others, but we may dissent from

others; we may not dissent from others only to contradict, whether the thing be true or false, but we may and must dissent from others to stand for the truth. Let it be proved, then, that Micaiah dissented from the four hundred false prophets only upon a humour to contradict them, or that Jeremiah strove with the whole earth, upon a delight to set himself against all men, and then let it be said that they were contentious men indeed. And let it be proved, that we generally, in dissenting from the Romish Church, do it upon a delight and pleasure that we take to make a perverse opposition, and then let it be said that we are contentious men indeed. Otherwise, in vain is it said, that either those prophets did, or that we in the general, or in the particular, do any thing in these matters through contention.

To know, then, whether anything be done through contention, these two rules are necessary: (1.) Is it done upon a humour and delight to contradict, whether it be true or false? Then it is done through contention. (2.) When the truth is manifested, is the opposition still maintained? Then it is done through contention. Otherwise, if we dissent from others at the first, and afterwards, when the truth is manifested, yield unto the truth, as often it falleth out when there is dissenting through ignorance, or if we dissent from others in the things wherein they dissent from the clear truth, only for the truth's sake, wherein we desire that they would agree with us, that which we do can no way be said to be done through contention, for thus we may do many things, but nothing may be done through contention.

Now I wish we were all of us as far from being contentious as we are every one of us loth to be called contentious, and that both church and commonweal were as free from the thing as the name is odious in both; every man more ready than other to post the name off from himself, and none so ready to abjure that he takes any delight in dissenting from other men as he that is most contentious of all. None will be contentious, and yet both church and commonweal groan under the burden of contentious men. In our church what cockatrice eggs be now a-hatching? what outworn errors of Pelagianism be now a-broaching? Liberty of will, universality of grace, salvation of all men, and other like damnable errors, must now be set on foot again, though the whole church be set on fire therewith. And by whom but contentious men, which cannot abide to agree with the church in the received truth, but in a conceit of themselves, and pride of their own wits, must run out from the rest, and have a conceit beyond the rest? In the commonweal, likewise, what siding and factioning, what garboils and divisions in every company and society, in every incorporation and body? And by whom but by contentious men, which, because they will be above all others, will not agree with any others? The truth is, that whereas nothing should

be done through contention, nothing almost is done *but* through contention. And yet every man will wash his hands of contention, but it is as Pilate washed his hands of the innocent blood, whenas his fingers dropped with the blood of that just One; and as well might Arius, Nestorius, Macedonius, and other like arch-heretics wash their hands, as many in our day can wash their hands of contention. Well, we see the apostle would have us to do nothing through contention. Let us hearken unto the apostle, and let us take heed of taking a delight in dissenting from others, and being always *ad oppositionem*.

Another fault, likewise, it seemeth, there was amongst the Philippians, which the apostle would have repressed, and that was vain-glory, a vain affectation of glory, which is when vain men, to get themselves glory, single themselves in some vanity from the rest. Now the apostle would have nothing done amongst them through vain-glory; he would have none of them so tickled with a vain desire of glory as to disdain to be like unto others, or to affect singularity in judgment, or any other thing, from the rest. Whence I observe, that, as contention, so vain-glory should be abandoned amongst Christians, nothing should be done amongst them through vain-glory; they should not, in the vanity of their hearts, single themselves in anything from the rest, so to get glory amongst men above the rest, neglecting the glory that cometh of God alone. Hereunto also maketh that exhortation of the apostle, where he saith, Gal. v. 26, 'Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.' In which place, first, we have a very plain prohibition of vain-glory, 'let us not be desirous of vain-glory.' It is a fault which haunteth even very good men; but, saith the apostle, 'let us not be desirous of vain-glory;' and then the rather to dissuade us from all desire of vain-glory, he setteth down two such fruits thereof as shew it to be a bitter grape: the one, 'provoking of one another,' for that men desirous of vain-glory are wont to provoke others to emulations and strife, that by dissenting from them they may get some glory unto themselves; and the other, 'envying of one another,' for that men desirous of vain-glory are wont to envy and spite others that seem any way to stand in their light, and to be as good as they themselves are.

So that hence also the reason why we are to do nothing through vain-glory is very plain; for when men once grow to that to be desirous of vain-glory, it is not possible that they should, as becometh Christians, be of one accord with others. For then, forsooth, we may not be as others either in judgment or in anything else; nay, then we disdain others, nay, then our thoughts are running on such things as wherein we may be singular above others. Then if we be men of the church, as we are called, we must either have new opinions by ourselves, or some new

interpretation by ourselves, or some new kind of defence of something by ourselves. And if we be other men, yet some thing or other there must be singular in us; whereupon some have called vain-glory the very mother of heresies and dissensions, whereby both church and commonweals have been ruined. So that ye see there is great reason of this caution among Christians, that 'nothing be done through vain-glory.'

Where briefly note this withal, that it is *vain glory* that we are not to affect, for this glory we may all affect, that men may speak well of us, and glorify God on our behalf, even as our apostle professeth that he did, where he saith, 'We give no occasion of offence in anything, that our ministry should not be reprehended;' whereby he meaneth that to the utmost of his power he endeavoured that his ministry might be magnified; and this glory also we may affect, so to do that which we do, as that we may have praise with God. But we are to do nothing through vain-glory, that by singling ourselves from others we may get praise amongst men.

And yet how many things are done through vain-glory by many of us! Our first parents were not more ready, at Satan's suggestion, to eat of the forbidden fruit, through a vain desire of glory to be like unto God, than we, their posterity and children after their own image, are ready through the like desire to do many things that we should not do. What is it that makes us go to Bellarmine, and setting a fresh varnish upon his reasons, to set abroad in the church new and strange opinions? What is it that makes us plead the pope's cause more than we need, and more than is either for the quiet of the church, or hath sound warrant by the word? What is it that makes us disdain to walk in the old and beaten way, and to seek out new ways to walk in? If it be not through contention, is it not through vain-glory, that we may get us a name? I point only at some things which I had rather you should conceive with yourselves than I speak of them. It is utterly a fault amongst us that many things are done through contention, many things through vain-glory, and good it were that the means how this might be remedied were diligently to be thought upon.

Now, the means how this might be remedied are prescribed in the next words by our apostle: let every man put on meekness of mind, and 'in meekness of mind let every man esteem other better than himself,' and then nothing shall be done through contention or vain-glory, 'but that,' &c. Where, first, we see that humility and meekness of mind is opposed unto contention and vain-glory, as a preservative against them, and preserver of that unity and concord whereof they are the bane. Secondly, ye see how it is defined to be a virtue whereby every man, not only men of meaner place and state, but whereby every man, of what state or place soever he be, esteemeth other

better than himself. Whence I observe a sovereign preservative against contentiousness and vain-glory, and so an only foster-mother of love, concord, and unanimity, and that is humility and meekness of mind, to ‘esteem every man better than ourselves.’ If we ourselves would be free from these cankered affections of contentiousness and vain-glory, if we would have nothing to be done amongst us either in church or in commonweal through contention and vain-glory, if we would have unity, love, and concord maintained amongst us, then must we every man of us put on meekness of mind, and ‘in meekness of mind every man of us must esteem other better than himself;’ he our state and place higher or lower, better or meaner, we must every man be low in our own eyes, every man willingly yield unto another, and every man think meanlier of himself than of other. Hereupon our apostle, being to exhort the Ephesians to ‘keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,’ begins his exhortation thus: Eph. iv. 2, ‘I therefore, being prisoner in the Lord, pray you, that ye walk worthy of that vocation whereunto ye are called, with all humbleness of mind, and meekness,’ &c., thereby implying that humbleness and meekness of mind is one of the best preservers of ‘the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,’ and so, consequently, one of the best preservatives against contentiousness and vain-glory; which yet will evidently appear, if a little we compare the contentious and the vain-glorious man with the meek and humble-minded man. The contentious man takes a delight in opposing himself against all, the humble man doth not willingly oppose himself unto any; the contentious man will not yield, the humble man willingly yieldeth; the contentious man standeth stiffly in what he maintaineth, be it true or false, the humble man easily relenteth from the false, and gladly submitteth himself unto the truth; the contentious man is in his element when he is stirring up strife, the humble man grieveth much to strive. If, then, we were humble men, nothing would be done through contention amongst us. Again, vain-glorious men think better of themselves than of others, the humble man esteemeth other better than himself; the vain-glorious man is puffed up with a conceit of his own excellency, and disdaineth others, the humble man is lowly in his own eyes, and reverenceth others; the vain-glorious man must be singular for something above others, the humble man is gladly of one accord, and of one judgment with others; the vain-glorious man thinketh every great place too mean for him, the humble man thinketh himself too mean for every place. If, then, we were humble men, nothing would be done through vain-glory amongst us. Again, the humble man gladly assenteth, willingly liketh, meekly submitteth himself unto everything that is good; if, then, we were humble men, we should easily be knit together in one mind and in one judgment. Indeed, if we were humble men, it must needs be that we should

be like-minded; having the same love, being of one accord, and of one judgment, it could not be that anything shoulde be done through contention or vain-glory amongst us.

An excellent virtue then, an excellent grace of God, is this humility and meekness of mind, but as rare as it is excellent. For who is he that in meekness of mind esteemeth other better than himself? Very common it is with us, in the vanity of our mind, to esteem of ourselves better than of others; to think of ourselves as the proud pharisee did in the Gospel of himself, and of others as he did of the publican; to think our own penny the best silver, to value our own gifts at the greatest worth, to make ourselves equal unto the best, and in taking honour to prevent one another. But very rare it is to think of others better than of ourselves, to make ourselves equal to them of the lower sort, in giving honour one to go before another, in rating of gifts to set our own at the lowest rate. Nay, we can say that this is no world for humbleness and meekness of mind, we must now either think well of ourselves, or else none will think well of us; we must now thrust out ourselves before others, or else we shall be left behind all others; we must now either exalt ourselves in some conceit of ourselves, or else we shall be so humbled that we shall be nought set by. And it is so indeed. But the less that this virtue is practised, the more it is to be urged; and the less favour it findeth amongst the sons of men, the more it savoureth of such grace as becomes the sons of God. Yea, but we can object against it and say, What if we know that we are better than others, more learned than others, more wise than others, &c., are we, then, in meekness of mind to esteem others better than ourselves? Whereunto I answer, understanding this to be spoken as it is to the church, that if we know some things in ourselves whereby we are better than others of our brethren, yet withal we must know that this grace is not given us to lift up ourselves above them; but for ourselves in comparing ourselves with others, we are to look upon our own wants and imperfections, and thereby to be humbled in ourselves; and for others, we are to cover their wants with charity, and to look upon the good things in them, and so to prefer them before ourselves. Or we may say, that in modesty we are to yield in many things of our own right, so that though David knew himself to be better than Saul, yet in modesty and in meekness of mind he may esteem Saul better than himself. Whatsoever be objected against this rare grace of humility, yet thus we must cut off contention and vain-glory, or else unity and love shall never be preserved amongst us.

Here, then, we see why it is that we are not like-minded one towards another, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one judgment; why it is that many things are done amongst us through contention and vain-glory; and it is because there is not in us that meekness of mind to esteem others better than our-

selves. In the words, therefore, of the apostle, Col. iii. 12, ‘I beseech you, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, &c.; in giving honour go one before another; be not high-minded, but make yourselves equal to them of the lower sort; deck yourselves inwardly with lowliness of mind: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Let nothing be done through contention or vain-glory, but in meekness of mind let every man esteem other,’ &c.

Look not, &c. Here is a dehortation from self-seeking of our own things, which is a third enemy unto that love, concord, and unanimity which before he persuaded; as it is also to humility, and an exhortation unto that virtue which is both a preservative against this evil, and a preserver of that love, concord, and unanimity which before he persuaded, and also of humility. Whence briefly I observe two means whereby to come to humility, and to preserve love, concord, and unanimity. The one is, not to look on our own things; the other, to look on the things of

other men; for if we look every man on his own things, as for example, every man on his own graces, on his own wit, on his own learning, on his own judgment, or every man on his own commodity, &c., and neglect or contemn the things of other men, what else will follow of this self-love but vain-glory? and what will follow of it but contention? What was the cause of the pharisee’s pride, and disdain of the poor publican? Luke xviii. 11. He looked upon his own fastings, and Sabbath-keepings, and tithe-payings, and such like things; he looked not on the publican’s confession, contrition, and humble prayer. We may look on our own things, on our own graces, to glorify God by them and for them, not to glory in them; and on our own commodities, in a Christian sort to seek them and to use them; but we may not only look on our own things, but also on the things of other men, not to be busy in their matters, but on their graces, to reverence them, and on their commodities, to regard them. Thus shall we be humbled in our own eyes, and thus love and concord shall be easily preserved.

LECTURE XXVII.

Let the same mind be even in you that was in Christ Jesus: who being in the form, &c.—PHILIP. II. 5-8.

THE apostle being now prisoner at Rome for Jesus Christ, in writing this epistle to the Philippians, and divers others which he wrote there in his bonds for the gospel’s sake, giveth most manifest and evident proof of the great care which he had over all those churches which he had planted in all places. In all which his epistles, as he laboureth to confirm them in the truth of that doctrine which by his preaching they had embraced, so most carefully everywhere he admonisheth them not to be troubled at the bonds which he suffereth for the gospel’s sake, assuring them that his imprisonment, afflictions, and all things that came to him, were to the furtherance of the gospel which he had preached. In which points, also, the apostle, having laboured earnestly in the former chapter of this epistle, now in this chapter, in the words before my text, he exhorteth them above all things to humility, meekness of mind, and brotherly love, that they should do nothing through contention, or vain-glory, or self-conceit, but that every man should esteem other better than himself, and should look on the things of other men, and not on his own things.

In these words which I have now read unto you, the apostle goeth forward to excite and stir up the Philippians, and in them us, unto this same true humility, meekness of mind, and brotherly love. Wherein that he might the rather prevail with them, he presseth the example of Christ, saying, ‘Let the same mind be in you,’ &c. In the opening and declaring of which

example of Christ Jesus, he first setteth down his humility, and then the issue thereof, which was his exaltation into glory. His humility is here described to be twofold. First, in that he being in the form of God, *i. e.* being God, and without all injury to the Godhead, equal in might, power, and majesty unto the Father, yet made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant. 1. Was made man, even the most abject amongst men. 2. In that being made man, he humbled himself, willingly laying aside, as it were, the power of his Godhead, and became obedient in all things which the law required of him unto the death, even the most shameful death of the cross. After this double description of Christ his humility, followeth and is set down the issue thereof, which was, that he was not left in this low estate, but was ‘highly exalted, far above all principality, and power, and might, and domination, and every name that is named, not in this world only, but in that also that is to come, so that at his name should bow every knee, both of things in heaven,’ &c. The argument, then, or reason which the apostle draweth to persuade them to true humility, and brotherly love one towards another, from Christ his example, in effect is this:—If Christ, who being God blessed for ever, and equal to the Father, yet so far humbled himself that he became man, and took on him the similitude of sinful flesh; and again, if Christ, descending from heaven in the similitude of sinful flesh,

and being made man, did yet so far humble himself that he became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross; lastly, if Christ being God, and having humbled himself to be man, and being man having humbled himself to the death of the cross, was therefore highly exalted, and had a name given him above every name, &c.,—how then ought we sinful men to put on us this humility and meekness of mind, no man through arrogance treading down his weak brethren, but every man esteeming other better than himself. This I take to be the apostle's argument in this place. It is, then, as if he had thus said:—

O ye Philippians, my heart's desire for you is, that ye may be found perfect and entire, lacking nothing, in the day of Jesus Christ. Wherefore I beseech you that nothing be done among you through contention, or through vain-glory, but that ye be like-minded one towards another, that ye love one another, and that in all humbleness and meekness of mind ye submit yourselves one unto another, and every man esteem other better than himself. Learn, I beseech you, of Christ Jesus himself, whose disciples, whose servants, members of whose body ye are; learn, I say, of him to be humble and meek. For he, being God, and (without all injury to the Godhead) equal in glory, and honour, and majesty, unto the Father, yet made himself of no reputation, and became man, and was like unto man in desires, in infirmities, in sorrows, and in all things, sin only excepted; yea, being man, he so far humbled himself, that he was obedient in all things even unto the death, and that the shameful death of the cross, where he hung between two thieves. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus; be ye humble and meek as he was, not in that degree, but in some measure frame yourselves unto that humility that was in him, and then assure yourselves that, as Christ was not thus left, but was highly exalted, &c., so you, if you humble yourselves, you shall be exalted. This I take to be the meaning of these words of the apostle.

They branch themselves, as you may see, into three parts; whereof the first is an exhortation unto humility and meekness of mind: 'Let the same mind,' &c. 2. Is set down the humility of Christ, as a pattern for them to look upon, and to persuade them to humility: 'Who being in the form of God,' &c. 3. Is set down Christ his exaltation into glory after his humiliation here on earth, as a motive also to persuade them unto love and humility: 'Wherefore God hath also,' &c. I can only point at those manifold notes, and most profitable instructions which hence might be gathered.

First, therefore, in the exhortation, we are to note what it is whereunto the apostle exhorteth the Philippians, and in them us. The thing whereunto he exhorteth both them and us, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, is that we should be humble and lowly, kind and courteous, gentle and loving one

unto another, in all humbleness submitting ourselves every man one unto another, and in all meekness of mind esteeming every other man better than himself. The like exhortation the same apostle maketh, where he saith, Rom. xii. 10, 'Be affectioned to love one another with brotherly love, and in giving honour go one before another.' In which place the apostle, together with his exhortation unto humility, the fruit whereof is the preferring of our brethren in honour before ourselves, joineth the ground thereof, which is love. For if we love our brethren, then we can willingly submit ourselves unto them, and prefer them before ourselves; but where this love of our brethren is not, there is contempt of them, and lifting up of ourselves above them. The like exhortation also the apostle Peter hath, where he saith, 1 Pet. v. 5, 'Submit yourselves every man one unto another, and deck yourselves inwardly in lowliness of mind;' in which place you see how the apostle speaketh of humility as of a special ornament wherewithal the child of God is decked and beautified, more than with all costly jewels and precious ointments whatsoever. But here it is to be observed, even from the apostle in this place of Peter, that there is a twofold humility and holiness: the one inward, the other outward; the one of the mind, the other to the eye; the one true and holy, the other ill and hypocritical. Of the outward and hypocritical humbleness the apostle speaketh, where he thus writeth unto the Colossians, chap. ii. 18, 'Let no man at his pleasure bear rule over you, by humbleness of mind, and worshipping of angels,' &c.; for the understanding of which place, it is to be understood that there were craftily crept in amongst the Colossians certain which taught them to worship angels, because, forsooth, it was a point of great arrogance straightway to rush into the holy place, and to worship God; greater humbleness seemed them, than forthwith to rush into God's presence, and to fall down before him, and to worship him. Much like unto those who, at this day, teach men to use the intercession of the saints departed this mortality, and to make their prayers unto them; not boldly and presumptuously themselves to enter into the King's palace before the throne of grace, but in all humbleness to prostrate themselves before the saints and their images, that so their prayers and supplications, through their intercession, may be accepted with God. But against such as by such humbleness seek to abuse us, the apostle plainly warneth us in this place; for that this humbleness is a voluntary submission, not taught by God, but chosen according to men's own phantasy. The inward humility and lowliness of mind is that whereof Peter here speaketh, and whereunto our apostle in my text exhorteth. It is the heart, the mind, and the soul that God regardeth: there must be the seat of humility, if it be true humility. The glory of the true Christian is within; and therefore it is said, Ps. xlv. 13, 'The King's daughter

is all glorious within : ' the King's daughter, *i.e.* the church ; and then, if thou be a lively member of the church, thy glory is within, and thy outward humility is then good, when it proceedeth from within, even from the lowliness of the mind.

And now that you see what it is, even what humility it is that the apostle exhorteth unto, ' I beseech you' (with the apostle) ' that the same mind be in you that was even in Christ Jesus, that in meekness of mind every man esteem other better than himself.' It is an exhortation, which, if we shall a little look into some of those properties which always follow this humbleness of mind wherunto the apostle exhorteth, I fear me we shall find that we have either never heard of, or never hearkened unto. The property of it is, ' in giving honour to prefer others,' as ye have already heard out of the apostle, Rom. xii. 10 ; and as is further proved by that parable of our Saviour Christ unto the guests, when he marked how ' they chose out the chief rooms at feasts,' Luke xiv. 7. Out of both which places it may appear that he that is truly humbled, in matters of honour, preferreth not himself before others, but preferreth others before himself. But how far we are from this humility, the great ambition of men in our days, and great seeking of every preferment, yea, of every petty office in every town incorporate, would speak if I should hold my peace. Nay, so far are we from preferring others before ourselves, that rather than we will not climb over the heads of those that are better than ourselves we will use all bribery and corruption ; yea, and out of our false hearts we will devise all manner of lies and slanders against them, and, rather than fail, we will libel against them. It is so, and where it is so, there wants this humbleness of mind here spoken of.

Another property of it is, that he that is humble, and as our Saviour calleth him, ' poor in spirit,' esteemeth others better than himself, as the apostle sheweth, ver. 3. He standeth not upon the conceit of his knowledge, of his honour, of his wealth, of his friends. If he have these things, he acknowledgeth them to be the blessings of the Lord, but no cause why he should swell with pride, or advance himself above his brethren. But doth not the wealthy, rich man tread under foot, and oppress with all wrong and violence his poor neighbours ? Is not the great scholar and wise man so puffed up with his knowledge, that he counts of others little better than fools ? Doth not the great man, whether it be that he be great in office, or in birth and friends, doth he not disdain his inferiors, and oftentimes make a mock of them ? I wish it were not so ; but if it be so, there wants in them this humbleness of mind here spoken of.

A third property of it is, as to humble us so before God, that we willingly acknowledge whatsoever good thing we have to be only from God, without any merit in ourselves, so without self-respects to regard the good of others, and of God's church. For the truly

humbled man doth not look on his own things, as it is in the former verse, as so loving them that he careth not for the things of other men, but he looketh on the things of other men ; and whatsoever is good for God's church, that he doth. I wish there were no cause of fear that this humbleness of mind were wanting. But who seeth not that the reformation of many abuses is hindered, that many godly and Christian exercises are stayed, that much good many times is left undone ? And why ? Forsooth, because such a one moved it, because such and such men call for it, such and such men like too well of it, and therefore rather than please their humours, let things stand as they are. A thing in practice too, too common, and what humbleness of mind where it is so ? By this which hath already been spoken, I think it may appear how little hitherto we have hearkened to this exhortation of the apostle. Well, I beseech you, that whatsoever is amiss in this behalf may be amended. ' Deck yourselves inwardly with lowliness of mind : in giving honour, go one before another : esteem every man another better than himself ; let neither opinion of wisdom puff you up, or of wealth make you swell ; but ' submit yourselves one unto another,' and ' let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.' And so I come to my second note out of this exhortation.

2. In this exhortation I note the inducement which the apostle useth to move them unto this humbleness of mind, which is the example of Christ Jesus. ' Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.' Will ye then have a reason why ye should be lowly in mind ? Christ Jesus, whose example is the rule of our life, and whose actions ought to be our instructions, he so humbled himself, that, being God, he for our sakes became also man ; how then ought we to submit ourselves one unto another, in all humbleness and meekness of mind ! The like motive or reason is used by our Saviour Christ himself, where he saith unto the people that were with him, Mat. xi. 28, ' Learn of me that I am meek and lowly in heart ;' as also, where he washeth his disciples' feet to teach them humility, John xiii. 15, and then saith unto them, ' I have given you an example that ye should do even as I have done to you.' What should I go forward to quote scriptures to this purpose ? Nothing more usual in the Scriptures than, by the example of Christ, to stir up unto our several duties ; and what ought to be more effectual with us to persuade us ? When the soldier sees his captain fight, there needs no further spur to set him into the battle. Christ is our Lord, and we his servants. If he, our Lord and Master, have given us such an example, and have said unto us, ' Do as ye have me for an example,' should there need any further spur unto us for this duty ? If he have so humbled himself for us, that, being God, he became also man ; if he have had such compassion on us that, when we were enemies unto him, he reconciled us unto God ; if he so loved us that he laid down his life

for us : how ought we to be humble and lowly-minded one towards another ! How ought we to have compassion upon our poor brethren, especially in this heavy time ! How ought we to love one another with brotherly love ! Christ, my brethren, is our head. If we be members of his body, we must draw our life and our spiritual nourishment from him ; we must in all things grow up into him which is our head. Far be it, therefore, from us to disdain our brethren, to wrong them, to oppress them, to contemn them, to swell in pride against them, Nay, rather let us use one another with all kindness, with all gentleness, with all meekness. Let us submit ourselves one unto another, let us be like-minded one towards another in Christ Jesus. Himself exhorteth us hereunto, he hath given us an ensample, ‘Let the same mind,’ &c.

Thirdly, I note the humility of Christ, whose example the apostle here exhorteth us to follow. His humility is here described by the apostle, first by his incarnation, in that, being God, he vouchsafed to take flesh of the blessed virgin, and to become man, like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. Secondly, by the work of our redemption, in that, being man, he yet again further ‘humbled himself, and became obedient to the death, even the most shameful death of the cross.’ In the description of Christ his incarnation are very many things most worthy our observation, touching both the natures in Christ, his Godhead and his manhood. I can only point at some of the heads of those observations which hence were to be made and more fully handled. First, for the Godhead of Christ, in that it is here said that he was ‘in the form of God,’ it is thereby proved that Christ was true God ; for in the selfsame manner and phrase of speech that here he is said to be in the form of God, in the same is it afterward said that ‘he took on him the form of a servant ;’ where, by the form of a servant the apostle expresseth his manhood, as here by the form of God is expressed his Godhead. Neither, indeed, can any be in the form of God who is not true God. And as in this place he is said to be in the form of God, whereby is meant that he is God, so in other places plainly and directly he is said to be God, as in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. ix. 5, ‘Of whom are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever ;’ and to the Colossians, chap. ii. 9, ‘In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;’ and in the Acts, chap. xx. 28, ‘Take heed, &c. to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.’ The phrase of speech in this place is somewhat different, but it is all one as if he had thus said, who being God. Secondly, I note, touching the Godhead of Christ, that he was equal in all things unto God the Father, as the apostle plainly sheweth, where it followeth, that he ‘thought it no robbery to be equal with God ;’ for in that he saith ‘he thought it no robbery,’ he plainly sheweth that it was his right,

and no injury at all unto the Godhead, for him that was God to be equal unto God. If, then, it be Christ his right, and no injury at all to the Godhead, that Christ be equal unto God the Father, then Christ, as touching his Godhead, is equal unto God the Father, howsoever, touching his manhood, he be inferior to the Father. And this be noted touching the divine nature of Christ.

Now touching Christ his manhood : First, in that it is here said, that ‘he made himself of no reputation,’ or as the word signifieth, that ‘he emptied himself,’ and of all brought himself unto nothing, I note Christ his manhood, not forcibly to have been imposed upon him, but himself voluntarily to have taken on him the form of a servant. When therefore it is said, that ‘God sent his Son in the similitude of sinful flesh,’ and again, that ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,’ &c., where God the Father is said to have sent, and to have given his Son, and the Son is said to be sent, and to be given, we are to understand the speeches thus, that God the Father sent his Son, and God the Son was sent of the Father; yet God the Father, and God the Son, being not two Gods, but one God distinguished into two persons, it is rightly said that God the Father sent the Son, and that the Son being one God with the Father, made himself of no reputation, voluntarily descending from his majesty, to be partaker of our misery. For if himself had not thus humbled himself, who could have imposed this base estate upon him, himself being God blessed for ever ? The angels which kept not their first estate, they were thrown down lower than the earth, even to be reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. But Christ when he was equal unto God in fulness of power, glory, majesty, knowledge, abased himself, and of almighty, made himself full of infirmity ; of immortal, made himself mortal. Secondly, in that it is said, ‘he took on him the form of a servant,’ I note that Christ so became man, as that he ceased not to be God. For it is not said that the Godhead was changed into the manhood, but that Christ, being God, took on him the form of a servant ; so uniting the Godhead and manhood in the unity of person into one Christ, as the reasonable soul and flesh is united into one man. A distinction therefore of natures there is in Christ, but no confusion of substance ; one Christ, and he both God and man. Thirdly, in that it is said he was made like unto men, I note the truth of his manhood. For the apostle’s meaning is, that in no sort he took on him the nature or qualities of angels, but took the seed of Abraham, and so made himself man ; that in nothing he differed from the common sort of men, tasting of all man’s infirmities, and in all things was as man, sin only excepted. Lastly, in that it is said, ‘he was found in shape as a man,’ I note the same thing that before, namely, the truth of Christ his manhood ; for in these words the apostle his meaning is, that his very person and behaviour shewed

him to be a man, and a man (as the prophet speaketh) full of sorrows. Thus have I briefly pointed at some of those notes and observations which may easily be gathered touching the Godhead and manhood of Christ, out of this description of Christ, his humility in his incarnation.

To knit up the whole in one general note and observation, here we may most clearly observe the great humility of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Even this one description of his incarnation may both most lively present it before our eyes, and be a most clear pattern unto us, how we ought to be minded one towards another. He that was very God, of the substance of the Father, glorious in majesty, wonderful in power, only wise, of right, and without any injury to the Godhead at all, every way equal unto God the Father, of himself vouchsafed to descend from his high and glorious majesty, and to take into the unity of his person the nature of a man, even the base condition of a servant, and in everything that concerns man's nature to be like unto all other men, sin only excepted. Here is love passing the love of women, and here is humility beyond all comparison. Who knoweth not this? and yet who followeth this pattern of Christ Jesus set before him? He, when we were enemies unto him, vouchsafed to come unto us; which of us will vouchsafe to go unto our enemy, and be reconciled unto him, though the commandment be, that the sun should not go down upon our wrath? Nay, how hardly are we drawn to come unto him that hath thus vouchsafed to come unto us? Let the bell ring in the forenoon and in the afternoon to call us to come unto him, that we may hear his will out of his word, yet either we will not come at all, or at our best leisure, when our own business is despatched. He for us vouchsafed to descend from his high throne of majesty, and to become man. But which of us will stoop down a whit, or at all let down our sail for our poor brethren's sake? Nay, if we be above them, rather than we will look so low, we will turn them out of house and home, out of lands and goods, yea, we will suffer them for want of food to perish in our streets. Oh, if Christ Jesus had been so unkind unto thee, how hadst thou ere this been plunged into the bottomless pit of hell, and so been prevented of this unkindness to thy brother! He disdained not to take on him even the basest condition of a man, even of a servant, and for our sakes to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. But how many of us with patience do bear our poverty? Nay, do we not murmur and grudge against God, as an unequal disposer of these temporal blessings? Do we not often break out into these intemperate speeches, rather than we will thus want, we will rob by the highway side or steal; rather than we will starve, we will have it out of the rich man's belly? &c. But know thou, that unless Christ had been poor for thy sake, thou hadst had thy portion with the devil and

his angels. He took upon him our infirmities, that so he might take compassion on our infirmities. But how many of us are moved to take compassion on the miseries, distresses, and infirmities of our brethren? Nay, how many of us do shut up all bowels of compassion against those that are in misery and distress, not clothing the naked, not feeding the hungry, not visiting the sick, not relieving the distressed? O my brethren, let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. If he thus humbled himself for our sakes, let us follow him in the practice of humility. Let us equal ourselves unto them of the lowest degree. Let us pluck down our high sails, and be ready to distribute unto the necessity of the saints. 'Let us do good unto all, but especially unto those that are of the household of faith.' Let us not say with the angel of the church of Laodicea, 'I am rich, and increased with gold, and have need of nothing:' but let us cast down ourselves for our sins, and let every man be humbled in his own soul, and so shall we submit ourselves one unto another. Let us always set before our eyes the humility of Christ Jesus in his incarnation, and thereby be provoked to all humbleness and lowliness of mind. Meditate on these things, all ye that fear God, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Meditate on these things, ye that now come, or hereafter mean to come, to the Lord's table, to be made partakers of the mysteries of Christ his blessed death and passion. Here Christ Jesus, who was made bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, inviteth you unto his holy supper, that you may be made bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Here, by a true and lively faith, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, ye are made bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, members of his body, and vessels of his glory. But there must be in you the same mind that was in Christ Jesus: ye must put away all hatred and contention, all rancour and malice; and as he came to us in love towards us, so we must come unto him in perfect love and charity towards all men. As he came unto us to kill sin in our flesh, so we must come unto him purged from the corruption which is in the world through lust, that so we may be 'partakers of the divine nature,' as Peter speaketh, 2 Peter i. 4. As he came unto us, giving us an ensample so to walk as he hath walked, so we must come to him with full resolution, and settled purpose, so to walk as we have him for an ensample, in all humbleness and lowliness of mind; or else, in coming unto him to this holy table, we heap unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the just judgment of God.

The Lord give us his grace, that we may walk as we have Christ Jesus for an example, that, submitting ourselves one unto another, we may be like-minded one towards another in Christ Jesus; that, every man esteeming other better than himself, we may all together, in all things, grow up into him which is our head, that is, Christ.

LECTURE XXVIII.

He humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross.—PHILIP. II. 8.

HE humbled himself, &c. In which words the apostle first proposeth this second humiliation of Christ in general, saying, ‘He humbled himself.’ Secondly, the apostle describeth it more particularly by the obedience of Christ unto the death, saying, ‘and became obedient unto the death.’ Where the apostle noteth a twofold obedience of Christ, the one before his death in his whole life, the other in and at his death; the former consisting in Christ his fulfilling of the law, the latter in his whole sufferings of death, and all the pains and sorrows thereof; for in that it is said that Christ became obedient unto the death, the apostle his meaning is, that Christ was obedient in all things that the law required of him, both doing the will of his Father in the whole course of his life, and further subjecting himself unto the death; so that he was not only obedient to his Father, to fulfil the law for us, but he was obedient unto the death, to lay down his life for our sakes. Lastly, this circumstance of his death is amplified by the kind thereof, ‘he became obedient unto the death, *even the death of the cross*,’ which was the most shameful and most accursed kind of death. So that the meaning of the apostle in this place is, that Christ, who so had already humbled himself, that of the Son of God, he was now become the Son of man, did yet further humble and abase himself, and became obedient unto his Father’s will in all things that the law required of him, even unto the suffering of death for us miserable sinners, submitting himself unto death for us, and that the most shameful death of the cross. This I take to be the meaning.

In these words, then, we are to note four doctrines touching Christ. The first is touching his humiliation; the second, touching his obedience in his life; the third is touching his death; the fourth is touching his kind of death.

In his humiliation I note, first, the person that was humbled; secondly, the manner of his humiliation; both set down by the apostle when he saith, ‘He humbled himself.’ For the first, touching the person, hence it appeareth that he who, being God, and equal with the Father, was now become man, ‘humbled himself, and became,’ &c. The person, then, that was humbled was Christ, God and man, perfect God and perfect man, subsisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh. And necessary it was that he who was now to work the work of our redemption should be both God and man: man, that, as man had sinned, so sin might be punished in man, for so God’s justice required; God, that he might be able to sustain the grievousness of the punishment due to our sins, which should be temporal, but yet equivalent to eternal pains;

for our sins being infinite, and the punishment due to them being infinite, because thereby we had grieved an infinite God, the person must needs be infinite which should pay the price of our sins. Again, it was necessary that he should be man, that he might suffer death, because for sin man had deserved death; and necessary likewise that he should be God, that he might be able to wrestle with the wrath of God, which none else could do but he that was God. Needs, therefore, must he be both God and man. And that he was so, as by this place it is plain, so by that likewise in the Acts, chap. xx. 28, where the apostle exhorteth the elders of Ephesus to ‘feed the church of God, which he,’ saith the apostle, ‘hath purchased with his own blood.’ In which place, he who hath purchased a church unto himself, is both called God, and also witnessed to be true man, in that he purchased it with his own blood.

Here, then, we may see the heinousness and grievousness of our sins, and the greatness of our misery by reason of them. God blessed for ever must become man, and God and man must be united into one Christ; and being thus united, must be humbled unto the death, and must pay the price of our sins by shedding of his own blood, or else the everlasting curse of God’s wrath abideth upon us, and our portion is with the devil and his angels, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. And yet what account or reckoning at all is made of sin? Surely so little, that it may be very well said unto us, which Hosea the prophet sometime said unto the children of Israel, Hos. iv. 1, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth,’ &c. And yet what remorse of these things, even now when the whole land mourneth for them, and groaneth under the burden of them! It had not been possible to satisfy God’s justice for the least of our sins otherwise than by everlasting death, unless God had become man, and so humbled himself to suffer whatsoever was due for man’s sin; and yet who is he that considereth in heart his sins, to reform the wickedness of his way? ‘Oh, consider this, ye that forget God,’ and grieve his Holy Spirit by your continual committed sins, ‘lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.’ Fly from sin as from a serpent. Christ Jesus, both God and man, hath paid the price for our sins. Let us not, therefore, henceforth serve sin in the lusts thereof, but let us glorify God both in our bodies and in our spirits.

The second thing which I noted in Christ his humiliation, was the manner of Christ his humiliation; which I note, 1, was voluntary; 2, that both his

manhood and his Godhead was abased. That his humiliation was voluntary, appeareth by that it is said, that 'he humbled *himself*.' As, then, his first humiliation when, being God, he took on him man's nature, was voluntary, so his second humiliation, when, being both God and man, he subjected himself unto the law and unto death, was voluntary. How, then, is it said that he 'was made obedient'? for so it is read in the original. He was made obedient not of any other, but of himself; neither forcedly, but willingly he made himself obedient, even as willingly he humbled himself. Now for the other point, that Christ was abased and humbled both according to his Godhead and his manhood. (1.) For his manhood it doth appear, in that it was made subject to the infirmities of man's nature, as also to the miseries and punishments which were due unto man for sin. (2.) For his Godhead, it was also abased, not as it is considered in itself,—for so it is immutable,—but in respect of the veil of the flesh, under which it was so covered that it lay hid from the first moment of Christ his incarnation to the time of his resurrection, without any great manifestation of his power and majesty therein.

Did he, then, who was both God and man, thus voluntarily humble himself in his Godhead and in his manhood? Did he so abase himself that he would be born in a cratch, converse with poor fishermen, eat and drink with publicans and sinners, be baptized of John, be tempted of the devil, wash his disciples' feet, and as a lamb before the shearer, so not open his mouth? What should this teach us, my brethren? Even willingly to submit ourselves one unto another, and all of us to deck ourselves inwardly with lowliness of mind. If abundance of wisdom and knowledge, if greatness in honour and dignity, if sovereign power and authority, had been sufficient motives and inducements for our Saviour Christ to stay himself from thus humbling himself, 'his name was Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace'; to him did belong all honour and glory, 'in him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' and 'of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace'; yet for all this he humbled himself willingly, as ye have heard. Let not, therefore, the conceit of wisdom and knowledge in ourselves, let not the conceit of our wealth and riches, of our preferments and honours, of our birth and friends, cause us to swell with pride of our own gifts, or to lift up ourselves above our brethren, or to disdain our inferiors; let not these be any stays why there should not be in us the same minds that was in Christ Jesus. 'Let every man make himself equal unto them of the lowest degree,' and 'let every man esteem other better than himself,' for 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble.' And let this be noted touching Christ his humiliation. It followeth,

And he became obedient; or, he was made obedient. Whence I note the second point which I proposed to be spoken of, to wit, Christ his obedience in his life unto the law, to fulfil the law; for if the question be asked, When, and how long was Christ obedient? the apostle answereth, *usque ad mortem*, 'unto the death'; not as if his death were no part of his obedience, but the apostle plainly implieth thereby that, as in the rest of his life he was obedient unto his Father's will, to fulfil the law for us, so was he obedient in his death to redeem us from death, hell, and the devil. Touching his obedience unto the law to fulfil the law, the apostle saith, Gal. iv. 4, that 'when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law,' that is, subject unto the law to fulfil the law. And of himself thus our Saviour himself speaketh, Mat. v. 17, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy them, but to fulfil them.' Christ, then, was made subject to the law, and came into the world to fulfil the law. And therefore he was circumcised the eighth day, he was presented to the Lord after the days of Mary's purification, and, as the text saith, Luke ii. 39, 'All things were done for him according to the law of the Lord.' He gave sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to go, &c., as it was so written of him, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. He preached the gospel to the poor, bound up the broken-hearted, preached deliverance to the captives, set at liberty them that were bruised, preached the acceptable year of the Lord, &c., as it was so written of him, chap. lxi. 1, 2. He was counted with the transgressors, though he had done no wickedness, neither any deceit was in his mouth; he bare the sins of many, and prayed for the trespassers, as it was so written of him, chap. lxxi. 12. In a word, whatsoever was written of him in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, all that he fulfilled. And therefore, when John would have put him back from his baptism, he said unto him, Mat. iii. 15, 'Let be now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness'; as if he had said, Stay not this act of my baptizing, for we must render perfect obedience unto the Father, in all things which he hath ordained. Now will ye know the reason why Christ thus fulfilled the law, as it is written of him? The apostle giveth it, where he saith, Gal. iv. 5, 'For this cause he was made subject unto the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law'; or, as the same apostle saith, Rom. viii. 4, 'That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,' i.e. that his fulfilling of the law in our flesh might be imputed for righteousness unto the children of his kingdom, as well as if they had fulfilled the law in their own persons. For when, as the same apostle thereto speaketh, by reason of our sinful flesh we were not able to fulfil the law, and therefore must needs perish

by the law, then God, sending his own Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, made him obedient unto the law, that his fulfilling of the law might be imputed for righteousness unto us which believe in Christ Jesus whom he hath sent, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Again, the work of our redemption consisteth not only in Christ his sufferings and death, but in his fulfilling of the law also. For the sufferings and death of Christ, considered apart from his legal obedience, only takes away the guilt and punishment, frees man from death, and makes him of a sinner to be no sinner; but that he may be fully reconciled to God, and accepted as righteous to life everlasting, this legal obedience of Christ must be imputed unto us. Witness the apostle, where he saith, Rom. v. 19, 'As by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' where, speaking generally of obedience, he meaneth Christ his whole obedience, which in all his lifetime he performed. For, as in the disobedience of Adam there was *transgressio legis unde facti sumus peccatores, sic in obedientia Christi fuit impletio legis, unde sumus justi*, the transgression of the law, whereby we are made sinners, so in the obedience of Christ there was the fulfilling of the law, whereby we are made just. And therefore, that he might be made of God unto us perfect justification and redemption, besides that he suffered and died for us that he might free us from sin and death, he also fulfilled the law for us, that so we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Here, then, is an exceeding great comfort for every faithful Christian soul. Christ hath fulfilled the law for us, and his obedience unto the law is now made our righteousness, so that now there is no condemnation unto them that are in Christ Jesus. Whatsoever the law required of us, all that he hath fulfilled in his own person, that so the righteousness of the law, which was impossible for us to perform, might be imputed unto us, and we delivered from the bondage of the law. He made himself subject unto the law, that by fulfilling of the law for us he might free us from all fear of condemnation by the law. Doth, then, the law present before thine eyes a curse and condemnation, if thou dost not continue in all things that are written in the hook of the law to do them? and doth thine own conscience tell thee that in many things thou hast offended, and many ways thou hast transgressed the law of thy God? Be not troubled, nor fear. Cast thy burden upon Christ Jesus. He hath fulfilled the law, not for himself, but for thee, that his obedience might be imputed for righteousness unto thee. Again, knowest thou that nothing that is unpure or unclean hath at any time entered into God's sight, and wouldst thou be presented pure and unblameable before him in that day? Here is the garment of thy elder brother Christ Jesus: in this his obedience thou shalt appear righteous before thy God in that day. Thine own obedience, thine own works, thine own righteousness,

seem it never so great and goodly, must vanish as a morning cloud in that day; for even thy best righteousness is but as the menstrual cloths of a woman, as the prophet speaketh. The cloak wherewithal thy nakedness must be covered is the righteousness of Christ Jesus, which righteousness is made thy own, if thou by a true and lively faith lay hold on him where he sitteth at the right hand of the Father in the highest places. What greater comfort can there be unto thine afflicted soul than this, both to be delivered from the curse of the law for not keeping it, and to be presented pure before thy God at that day? And all this comfort thou mayest have by this obedience of Christ Jesus.

And as this obedience of Christ Jesus unto his Father's will, to fulfil the law for us, may justly minister this comfort unto us, so may it further teach us to yield all obedience unto the will of our heavenly Father. For howsoever we be freed from the condemnation of the law, because Christ hath fulfilled the law for us, yet are we not freed from the performance of our obedience unto the moral law of God; but even by this example of our Saviour Christ we are more straitly tied thereto; for, 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith he remaineth in Christ ought even so to walk as he hath walked' : in all humility, and in all obedience to his heavenly Father's will; ver. 4, 'He that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but he that keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfect indeed'; ver. 5, 'And hereby we know that we are in him, and that we love him, if we keep his commandments.' As, therefore, Christ walked in the law, and performed all obedience unto his Father's will, so remember thou to walk with thy God, and to keep his commandments with thine whole heart. Beware that thou dissemble not; heware that thou present not thyself in the assembly of God's saints to hear his word, or to receive his holy sacrament, either for fashion's sake, or for fear of the law only to save thy purse, for so thou purchasest unto thyself a fearful judgment. Beware how thou dalliest with thy God; for he seeth not as man seeth. Well thou mayest dissemble with man; but he searcheth the heart and reins, and he knoweth all thy thoughts long before they be conceived by thee. Let thy heart be sound with thy God and his commandments, let them be in thy heart to do them. And so much of Christ his obedience.

It followeth: *And became obedient even unto the death*; his death being likewise a part of his voluntary obedience unto his Father's will; for both in fulfilling the law, and in suffering death for us, he shewed his obedience unto his Father, and wrought the works of our redemption. Here, then, is the third doctrine touching Christ which I proposed to be observed, which is touching his death, under which name I understand, not only the separation of his soul from his body, but all the pangs and agonies which he suffered

both in soul and body. For as it was written of him, Isa. liii. 4, ‘ He bare our infirmities, and carried our sins, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was broken for our iniquities, he made his soul an offering for sin, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;’ as thus, I say, it was written of him, so thus he suffered, and was obedient unto the death. Will you, then, see what manner of death Christ suffered? He suffered not only a bodily death, and such pains as follow the dissolution of nature, but he suffered likewise in his soul the wrath of God for the sins of the world, lying so heavy upon him that it wounded his flesh and his spirit also, as the Scripture speaketh, ‘ even to death.’ For if he had suffered no more but in body, then he overcame no more but a bodily death, and then were our state most miserable; but our sins having deserved, not the bodily death only, but even death both of body and soul, by the death which he suffered he overcame death and the power of it, both in our bodies and in our souls. Whence was it that, when his death approached, he began to be in sorrow and heaviness? Whence was it that he said unto his disciples, ‘ My soul is very heavy, even unto the death’? Whence was it that so often he fell on his face, and prayed that, ‘ if it were possible, that cup might pass from him’? Whence was it that an angel appeared from heaven unto him to comfort and strengthen him? Whence was it that, as he prayed, ‘ his sweat was like drops of blood, trickling down to the ground’? Was not this, and all this, even from the pains which he felt in his soul, by reason of the wrath of God against sin? Can we think that all this came to our Saviour Christ for fear of a bodily death? Have his servants, that receive of his fulness, so despised this death of the body, that either they wished for it to be with Christ, or rejoiced in the midst of it before the persecutor; and did our Saviour himself so fear and tremble at the remembrance of it? Did the apostles sing in prison, and rejoice when they were whipped and scourged? Did Paul glory in the tribulations which he suffered; and did our Saviour, in such like pain, cry in the bitterness of his soul, ‘ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Nay, my brethren, that which made Christ to be heavy would have crushed his apostles in pieces; that which made him sweat blood in the garden, would have sunk them into hell; that which made him cry, would have held both men and angels under everlasting woe and lamentation. Besides his bodily death, therefore, and the pains that followed thereupon, he felt in his soul most grievous pains, through the wrath of God which was upon him for our sins. And thus ye see what death he suffered for our sakes, when he was made obedient to the death.

The fruits and benefits which we receive by Christ his death are these: 1. By his death we are freed from that death which is both of body and soul, have

the victory over that death which is the reward of sin, as witnesseth the apostle, Heb. ii. 14, Rom. viii. 1. For our Saviour, by his death, hath pulled out the sting of death, and on the cross hath triumphantly said, ‘ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ And therefore, when we feel the pangs of death approach, we should not fear, but be full of hope, considering that our death is now changed by the virtue of Christ his death, and is the entrance into an everlasting life. 2. By Christ his death we have remission and forgiveness of our sins, as saith our Saviour himself, wherein the institution of his supper, Mat. xxvi. 28, ‘ This my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’ For the remembrance of which, his blessed death and fruits of his passion, he hath ordained this holy sacrament of his supper to be continued in his church for ever. In which holy supper the death and passion of our Saviour is so lively represented unto us, as if we had seen it with our eyes, the bread betokening the body, the wine the blood of our Saviour Christ; the breaking likewise of the bread signifying the breaking of his body with those unspeakable torments which he suffered, and the pouring out of the wine the shedding of his most precious blood, when his blessed side was gored with the spear of a soldier; our eating of the bread and drinking of the wine assuring us of our incorporation into Christ, to be made partakers of all the benefits of his passion. When ye come, therefore, to this holy supper, remember that ye are called hither to continue the remembrance of his blessed death and passion until his blessed coming again. Repent you earnestly of your manifold sins, for the remission whereof Christ shed his own heart’s blood. Love one another, even as he hath loved us, who laid down his life for us. And have faith in Christ Jesus, ‘ whom God hath set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood.’ By faith in Christ Jesus we receive remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his death and passion. By love of our brethren we testify our love of God, who sent his Son to be a reconciliation for our sins. And with the contrition and sorrow of our hearts for our sins the Lord is better pleased than with all burnt-offerings and sacrifices. These are the things which the Lord requireth of us, even faith, repentance, and love; and as at all times, so at this time especially, when we come to the receiving of these holy mysteries, let us think of these things. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation, crucifying again unto himself the Lord of glory and King of our peace. But he that examineth himself, and so eateth of this bread, and drinketh of this cup, is made one with Christ, and Christ with him, and Christ shall raise him up at the last day, so that he shall never see death, because he believeth in him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. It followeth:—

Even the death of the cross. The most shameful

death that they could put him unto. Here, then, is the fourth and last point which I noted in these words, which is, the kind of his death, whereunto he submitted himself. The kind of his death was, he was crucified between two thieves, where he was mocked of all sorts of men, where, in feeling of the whole wrath of God upon him, he cried out. ‘ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ’ where, having performed all things that were written, he said, ‘ It is finished,’ and so commended his spirit into the hands of his Father.

Whence, 1, we may learn with bitterness to bewail our sins, for which Christ was thus cruelly nailed on the cross, and there suffered the whole wrath of God. 2. To crucify our flesh, and the corruption of our nature, and the wickedness of our hearts. ‘ For they that are Christ’s crucify the flesh with the affections and the lusts,’ Gal. v. 24. 3. It may teach us that,

when we suffer any judgment, cross, or calamity in body or in mind, we do not suffer them as any curse of God, but as the chastisements of a loving Father. For Christ Jesus, in his cross being accursed for us, hath delivered us from all curse. Beloved, let us think of these things, mourning for our sins, mortifying the deeds of the flesh, and comforting ourselves in the cross of Christ Jesus, who abased himself for us, fulfilled the whole law for us, died for our sins, and was nailed to the cross for our iniquities.

O Lord, teach us to humble ourselves both before thee and one unto another ; teach us to do thy will ; teach us to die unto sin, that we may live unto thee ; and daily more and more crucify the old man in us, that, being renewed in the spirit of our minds, we may henceforth serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life !

LECTURE XXIX.

Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and giren him a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus d.c.—PHILIP. II. 9, 10.

IT remaineth now that we proceed from the description of Christ his humility, unto the description of his exaltation into glory after his humiliation here on earth, set down in these words :—

Wherefore God hath also, &c., in which words the apostle, 1, in general setteth down Christ his exaltation into glory as a consequent or effect following his humiliation, and obedience unto death, when he saith, ‘ Wherefore God hath also,’ &c. Him, even Jesus, who was crucified, hath God raised unto life, set him at his right hand, and made him both Lord and Christ. 2. The apostle setteth down a more particular specification and explication of Christ his exaltation into glory, (1.) when he saith, ‘ and given him a name,’ &c.; whereby is meant that God, having raised him from the dead, hath given him such majesty and glory in the heavenly places, that he hath appointed him Lord over all things, and made him head unto the church, which is his body. (2.) When he saith, ‘ that at the name,’ &c., whereby is meant that God hath made all things subject under his feet, and that all creatures ‘ shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, unto the glory of God the Father.’ It is, then, as if the apostle had thus said : Christ, when he was God, humbled himself to be man ; and being God and man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death for us ; therefore God hath highly exalted him that thus humbled himself, and hath crowned him in the heavenly places with glory and honour, ‘ far above all principality, and power, and might, and domination, and every name that is named ;’ so that all creatures now do, and shall, cast down their crowns, and fall down before him, and say, ‘ Praise,

and honour, and glory be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for evermore.’ And let this be spoken touching the order and the meaning of these words in general. Now let us look a little unto the general scope of them, and see what lessons we may learn from them.

Wherefore God hath, &c. The general scope and drift of the apostle in these three verses is, by the consequent and good end which God giveth unto humility, further to persuade us unto humility and lowliness of mind, that so, if the example of Christ his humiliation cannot prevail with us, to move us unto humility, yet the excellency of that dignity whereunto he was exalted after, and for his great humility, may persuade us thereunto. Whence I gather these three observations for our instruction :—

1. Hence I note the gracious goodness of our merciful God, who seeketh every way to win us unto that which he requireth of us. Sometimes he threateneth, that so for fear of his judgments we may walk in the law that he hath appointed for us. Sometimes he punisheth, for that in our affliction we seek him diligently, as the prophet Hosea speaketh, Hosea v. 15 ; and sometimes he promiseth, that by his promises we may become partakers of the divine nature, as Peter speaks, 2 Peter i. 4 ; that so we may be drawn from the corruptions which are in the world through lust, as the same apostle there expoundeth himself. In this place, having pressed us with the example of Christ his humiliation unto humility, he setteth down the excellency of that dignity whereunto Christ was exalted after his humiliation, that so seeing the reward, or at least the con-

sequence which followeth humility, we may embrace this holy virtue which he requireth of us. A man would have thought that this should have been enough to persuade us to set before us the example of Christ Jesus. And when we have used any reason to such or such purpose, we think we have done well, and bid him whom we speak unto look to the afterclaps if he hearken not unto us. But such is the mercy of our good God, that he leaveth not with a little, but he heappeth reason upon reason, and addeth motive unto motive, and rather than he will not prevail with us, he will do with us as we do with little children, by most great and precious promises, he will persuade us unto that he requireth of us. Oh let us take heed how we hearken not unto the voice of so good and gracious a God.

2. Hence I note the dulness of our minds unto every good motion of the Spirit, unless the Lord do, as it were, draw us with the cords of love, and even force us, by multiplying his mercies towards us. There must be precept unto precept, line unto line, reason unto reason, and after all this, promise or hope of reward ; or else, be the motion never so good, yet we will not hearken unto it. Unto pride and vain-glory, unto contention and oppressing one of another, we run apace, and need no spur to set us forward ; nay, not any reason here shall rule us, but run we will after our own unbridled affections. But to prevail with us to put on tender mercy, kindness, meekness, humbleness of mind, to persuade us to be courteous one unto another, and to submit ourselves one unto another, there must be exhortation upon exhortation, the example of Christ Jesus must be proposed unto us, and besides all this, there must be certain hope of glory after humility ; and well if all this can persuade us unto humbleness and lowliness of mind ; such is our backwardness, and so slow are we to hearken unto the things that belong unto our peace. We should love our God, even for himself, because he is good, and goodness itself ; we should keep his commandments, because they are his, and good and righteous altogether ; we should embrace humility, because we should be conformable to the image of Christ Jesus. But to stir up our slackness and dulness unto these and the like duties, he hath given us most great and precious promises, and assured us that the performance of these duties shall not be in vain in the Lord. Let us not still harden our hearts, as in the day of slaughter ; let us not still stop our ears at the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely ; but if nothing else will prevail with us, yet let his promises persuade us unto our duties, and let the sure hope of glory stir us up unto humility.

3. Hence I note, that the high way to be exalted into glory is to deck ourselves inwardly with lowliness of mind ; which is not only proved by this example of our Saviour, the consequent of whose humility was an eternal weight of glory, as here we see, but by

many other places of Scripture more. Our Saviour Christ saith, ‘ Whosoever exalteth himself shall be brought low, and whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted.’ Solomon saith, Prov. xxii. 4, ‘ The reward of humility, and the fear of God, is riches, and glory, and life.’ And in another place, chap. xv. 33, ‘ The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honour goeth humility.’ The reason is given by the same Solomon in another proverb, chap. iii. 34, where he thus saith, ‘ with the scornful the Lord scorneth, but he giveth grace unto the humble ;’ which the apostles Paul, Peter, and James, doth thus read, ‘ God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.’ How humble and lowly-minded David and Solomon were, the Scriptures do witness ; as also how high the Lord exalted the throne of their glory. The like might be said of many others mentioned in holy Scriptures, which I willingly now pass over, because I have heretofore pressed this point. Only, in a word, with Saint James, I exhort you to ‘ cast yourselves down before the Lord, and he shall lift you up.’ ‘ The pride of a man shall bring him low, but the humble in spirit shall enjoy glory,’ Prov. xix. 23. Swell not therefore with pride one against another, whatsoever blessings you have of wisdom, wealth, or honour, one above another. Let nothing be done among you through contention or vain-glory, but let every man, in meekness of mind, esteem others better than himself ; ‘ let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,’ and this know for a surety, that as here in Christ, he was first humbled and then exalted, so before glory goeth lowliness and humility, Prov. xviii. 12. And let this suffice to be observed out of the original scope and drift of the apostle in these words. Now let us a little more nearly look into them, and see what further use we may make of them ; and first of these, where the apostle setteth down in general Christ his exaltation into glory, saying :

Wherefore God hath, &c. In which words I observe, 1, The cause of his exaltation, or rather, the sequel of his cross ; 2, who exalted him ; 3, in what sense he is said to have been exalted. Touching the first, the word *wherefore*, here used, may either signify a cause or a consequence, so that we may understand the apostle either thus, that because Christ thus humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross, therefore God highly exalted him ; or thus, that Christ first humbled himself, and tasted of the sorrows of death for us, and afterwards God highly exalted him. After this latter sort doth the apostle speak, where he saith, Heb. ii. 9, that Christ was ‘ made a little inferior to the angels, to the end that he might suffer death, and so was crowned with glory and honour.’ After this latter sort doth Christ himself speak unto the two disciples which were going toward Emmaus, saying, Luke xxiv. 26, ‘ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ?’ In both which places the

apostle, and our Saviour himself, speaketh of his crown of glory and honour as a consequence of his cross, not as caused by the cross ; as following his cross, but not as merited by his cross. And if we follow this sense, hence we may gather this very profitable lesson, that if we desire to reign with Christ in glory, then must we be content to bear his cross in this life, and with him to suffer affliction in this vale of misery. He first ‘drunk of the brook in the way,’ as the prophet speaketh, Ps. cx. 7, and then he ‘lift up his head ;’ first he had his cross, and then his crown ; first he did wear a crown of thorns, and then a crown of glory. So we, if we will be made like unto his image, we must suffer with him that we may be glorified with him ; we must, through our sufferings and crosses, be driven even to shed tears, if we will have all tears wiped from our eyes. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. As he hath chalked the way, so must we walk, even through afflictions and troubles, through sorrows and crosses, unto that inheritance immortal and undefiled, reserved in heaven for us.

Let not, then, thy soul be troubled or cast down, at whatsoever trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, cross, or persecution. Let not loss of goods, loss of friends, the reproaches of the wicked, the contempt of the world, the misery of thy life, or all the manner of evil things which can be said or done against thee, for Christ his sake, trouble or dismay thee. Nay, in the midst of thy crosses and afflictions, comfort thyself with these things : first, afflictions and troubles are that strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life, for we ‘must, through many afflictions, enter into the kingdom of God,’ Acts xiv. 22. Secondly, by our sufferings and afflictions we are made like unto the image of Christ, who, being the Prince of our salvation, was consecrated through afflictions. Thirdly, by crosses and adversities, we are brought to acknowledge our sins unto the Lord, and to reform the wickedness of our ways. And therefore David said, Ps. cxix. 67, ‘It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I might learn thy statutes ;’ and again, ver. 71, he saith, ‘Before I was troubled, I went wrong, but now I keep thy word.’ And the Lord, by Hosea, saith, ‘In their afflictions they will seek me diligently.’ Fourthly, in all our afflictions Christ suffereth with us ; and therefore Paul calleth his afflictions which he suffered, by sea or land, of friends or enemies, in body or in spirit, the afflictions of Christ. In every cross he suffereth with us, and every cross sealeth his love unto us. Lastly, our afflictions are but for a little while, and after them is glory for ever : as it is written, ‘Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.’ Why art thou, then, so sad, O thou distressed soul, and why do thoughts arise in thine heart ? Comfort thyself in this, that thine afflictions conform thee unto Christ his image, and set thee in the plain and right way to salvation and glory.

Thou art chastised of the Lord, but because thou shouldest not be condemned with the world ; thou lamentest and weepest, but that Christ may wipe all tears from thine eyes ; thou diest with Christ, but it is that thou mayest live for ever ; thou here eatest the bread of tears, and drinkest the water of affliction, but the Lord hath reserved for thee life and joy for evermore ; for it is a true saying, 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, ‘If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him, and if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him.’ And let this suffice to be noted from this sense.

Now, if we follow the other sense, and understand the apostle thus, that because Christ humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, then we are further hence to note, that Christ his exaltation into glory for us, was not only a *consequent* of his death and passion, but his death and passion was a *cause* of his exaltation into glory for us ; so that by his death and passion he deserved exaltation into glory. I do not here dispute the question, which commonly hence is moved, whether Christ by his death and passion deserved this exaltation into glory for himself, or only for us, the whole tenor of the Scripture running thus, that Christ became man for us, fulfilled the law for us, was tempted for us, was clothed with infirmities for us, tasted of sorrows for us, made his soul an offering for us, died for us, rose again for us, and whatsoever he did, did all for us. I understand the apostle thus, that by his death and passion he merited and deserved exaltation into glory for us. My observation then hence is, that by the merits of Christ his death and passion is purchased salvation and glory to all them that obey him ; for ‘by his blood hath he obtained eternal redemption for us, and entered in once into the holy place,’ that is, into heaven, for us, Heb. ix. 12. Yea, even by the merits of his death do we plead and sue for that inheritance, immortal and undefiled, reserved in heaven for us,—a privilege only proper unto Christ, that by his sufferings he should merit at all, either for himself, or for others. For of all our afflictions and sufferings, that is to be said which Paul saith of his afflictions, Rom. viii. 18, ‘I account,’ saith he, ‘that the afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory which shall be shewed unto us ;’ where the apostle plainly renounceth all merit of life and glory unto his sufferings and afflictions. And our Saviour Christ likewise plainly telleteth us, that when we have done all that we can, even all that is commanded us, we must say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done only that which was our duty to do, Luke xvii. 10. If, when we have done all that we can, we are unprofitable servants ; if, when we have done all that is commanded us, we have only done our duty : then what claim can we make by merit or desert ? Nay, if we look unto our merits, we shall find that ‘eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ,’ and that we

have only deserved death and everlasting condemnation. For 'whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet faileth in one point, he is guilty of all,' James ii. 10, and of the condemnation due to the breach of them all. Now, certain it is, that 'in many things we offend all,' and that our best righteousness is but as the menstrual cloths of a woman; even the best thing that we do is stained with sin, and full of unrighteousness; so that if we stand upon our own merits, we see we must needs perish all. We must then fly from ourselves, and renouncing our own merits, rest ourselves wholly and only on the merits of Christ Jesus, by whose death and passion we have an entrance into glory. For his passion being the passion of the Son of God, was both a full satisfaction unto God's justice for us, and worthily deserved the glory which he hath purchased for us, and given unto us. And let this be spoken touching the sequel of Christ his passion, or the cause of his exaltation into glory. It followeth:—

Wherfore God, &c. The second thing which hence I observed was, Who exalted him? And that is here set down, when it is said, *God* hath highly exalted him. Christ then having humbled himself, and been 'obedient even unto the death,' God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, Acts ii. 31. So David had said long before, saying, 'Thou shalt not leave my soul in grave, neither shalt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;' which Peter avoucheth to be spoken of God raising up Jesus from the dead: 'To this likewise give all the Scriptures witness, that God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;' the Father by the Son, and the Son by the eternal Spirit that was within him. Here then is our comfort, that he who hath loosed the sorrows of Christ his death, and raised him up by his power, will also give a good end unto all our troubles, and raise us up also by Jesus, and set us with him. Ps. xxxiv. 19, 'Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all.' And if it be so, that thou see not the fruit of this promise in this life, but goest to thy grave in mourning under the cross, yet know this, that he which hath raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise thee up also by Jesus, and set thee with him, and there wipe all tears from thine eyes, and cover thee with the garment of gladness. But withhold let me give you this caveat: 'Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters: but if any man suffer as a Christian,' poverty, sickness, persecution, imprisonment, or what cross else soever, 'let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this behalf,' 1 Pet. iv. 15, 16. For Christ hath also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God, and God for our momentary and light afflictions, in that day will give us an eternal weight of glory. Wherfore, as the apostle doth, so

I exhort you, 'Let him that suffereth,' what cross soever it be, 'according to the will of God, commit his soul to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator,' 1 Pet. iv. 19, and he that loosed the sorrows of death from Christ, shall give in his good time a good end to all his troubles. And thus much touching the second point, to wit, who exalted him. It followeth:—

Wherfore God hath also highly exalted him. Where we are to see in what sense Christ is said to have been exalted, and not only so, but highly exalted, which was the third thing which I proposed hense to be observed. 1. Therefore Christ was exalted, when he was raised from the dead, when his body, which was sown in dishonour, was raised up in glory. 2. He was highly exalted, when, ascending into heaven, he was set in the heavenly places, 'far above all principality and power, and might, and domination; and every name that is named, not in this world only, but also in that that is to come.' Thus God exalted, and highly exalted, Christ Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified. Here then, first, we have the testimony of the apostle for that point of our faith, the resurrection of Christ Jesus. 'He made his grave with the wicked,' as the prophet had prophesied, Isa. liii. 9. He was buried, and the pit had shut her mouth upon him, even the womb of the earth had enclosed him in; but God the third day exalted him, raising him from the dead, and not suffering his body to see corruption. If I thought it needful further to prove the resurrection of Christ Jesus unto you, his sundry appearances after he rose again from the dead, first unto Mary Magdalene, then unto the two disciples that went to Emmaus, then to Peter, then to all the disciples together, save Thomas, then to all the disciples, then to more than five hundred brethren at once; these, I say, his manifold appearances, and many other testimonies of holy Scripture, might at large prove the same unto you. But my desire rather now is to lesson you in such things, as Christ his resurrection may teach us.

First, therefore, the resurrection of Christ Jesus may put us in mind of this duty, that as he was raised again from the grave, wherein he lay dead, unto life, so we ought to rise from the graves of sin, wherein we lie dead, unto newness and holiness of life. 'If ye be risen with Christ,' saith the apostle, Col. iii. 1, 'then seek those things which are above;' as if he should have said, Christ is risen from the dead; if you be risen with him, and lie not still dead in your sins, then seek those things which are above. Where you see how the apostle putteth them in mind of Christ his resurrection, so to awaken them from the dead sleep of sin unto holiness of life. More plain to this purpose is that of the same apostle, where he thus saith, Rom. vi. 4, 'We are buried with Christ by baptism into his death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.' In which words

most plainly ye may see, how the apostle presseth the similitude of Christ his resurrection to prove that we ought to walk in newness of life. But in this place, most worthy our consideration it is, how the apostle maketh baptism a resemblance of Christ his death and resurrection, and so by an argument from our baptism prooveth, that we ought to walk in newness of life: ‘By baptism,’ saith the apostle, ‘we are buried with Christ into his death; that as he died for sin, so we by the power of his death should die unto sin;’ again, in baptism we are baptized into Christ his resurrection, that as he was raised again from death unto life, so we should rise from sin, wherein we are dead, unto newness and holiness of life. Want you, then, motives to persuade you unto newness of life? Behold Christ is risen again, behold we are baptized into Christ his death and resurrection, therefore we ought to walk in newness of life. Art thou then a Christian, and yet wantest thou proof that thou oughtest to walk in newness of life? Look back into thy baptism; wast thou not there visibly received into the church of Christ, and communion of God’s saints? Wast thou not there sacramentally adopted into the number of the sons of God? Was not there thy name registered amongst the children of the Most High? Didst thou not there receive press-money to fight under the banner of Christ Jesus? Didst thou not there promise unto the Lord thy God in the congregation of his saints to forsake the world, the flesh, the devil? Did not thy God there make a covenant with thee, that he would be thy God, and thou again with him, that thou wouldest be his child? Wast thou not there sacramentally born again of water and of the Spirit, as at the first thou wast naturally born of flesh and of blood? In a word, wast thou not baptized into Christ Jesus, even into Christ Jesus dead, and risen again from the dead? Wast thou not baptized into Christ his death, that thou mightest die unto sin? Wast thou not baptized into his resurrection, that thou mightest live unto God? Yes, men and brethren, if you look back into your baptism, ye shall find every of these things true in every one of you. And, therefore, we bring little children to be baptized, that here they may receive the seal of that great covenant whereby God is their God, and they his people, that here they may be visibly received into the church, adopted into the sons of God, registered amongst his children, and receive as it were press-money to fight under the banner of Christ Jesus against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that here they may be baptized into Christ Jesus, even into the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. And want we yet a sufficient reason to persuade us unto newness and holiness of life? Surely we want no sufficient reason to persuade us; but yet this reason is not sufficient to persuade us and prevail with us. The ministers of God may lift up their voices and cry daily, ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and

stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life,’ Eph. v. 14. They may cry till their hearts bleed within their bodies; nay, they may cry till the breath go out of their bodies, ‘Know ye not that all ye that are baptized are baptized into Christ his death, and into Christ his resurrection, that ye might die unto sin and live unto God?’ But who doth hear? Whose hearts are so pricked that they cry, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Souud a trumpet in a dead man’s ears, he moves not, he hears not. And surely so dead are we in our sins, that how loud and often soever the trumpet of God’s voice sound unto us a retreat from sin and wickedness unto newness and holiness of life, yet we hear it not, we are not at all moved therewith. O my brethren, the very meditation of our baptism with ourselves, and the seeing of the same administered unto others, should sufficiently preach unto us mortification from dead works, and sanctification in holiness of life; especially baptism, being so notable a resemblance of Christ his death and resurrection, as that it doth most lively represent unto us, 1, our remission of sins by the death of Christ, in that our souls are so cleansed by the Spirit from the filthiness of sin, even as the filth of the body is washed with water; 2, our regeneration and new birth by the power of his resurrection, in that after the washing by the Spirit we rise again cleansed by the same Spirit. Let these things, men and brethren, sink deep into your souls. Let the meditation of your baptism call to your remembrance the death and resurrection of Christ, and let all these stir you up unto newness and holiness of life, that as he was exalted rising from death unto life, so ye may be exalted rising out of your sins to live in righteousness and true holiness. The second thing which Christ his resurrection may teach us is, that our bodies also, howsoever they be turned into dust, torn of beasts, or devoured of fishes, yet shall rise again at that day; for his resurrection is a most certain and sure pledge of our resurrection, and therefore is he called, ‘the first fruits of them that sleep,’ 1 Cor. xv. 20, because, as in the first fruits, which were offered by the law, all the rest of the corn was sanctified, so in Christ his resurrection we have a most sure pledge of our resurrection. But yet this withhold thou must note, that unless thou have part in the first resurrection, thou shalt never have part in the second, *i. e.* unless thou first in this life rise from sin in newness of life, thou shalt never rise again after this life into glory, but only unto everlasting condemnation, which is called the second death. Unto you, therefore, I say, as Paul spake to the Romans, chap. viii. 11, ‘If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, then he that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies.’ And by this ye know that the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you, if ye mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit in newness and holiness of life. Oh strive to have your second resurrec-

tion into glory assured unto you by your first resurrection in newness of life. 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; for on such

the second death hath no power,' Rev. xx. 6. Such enter not into condemnation, but have their part in the second resurrection.

LECTURE XXX.

And given him a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus should every knee bow, &c.—PHILIP. II. 9, 10.

AND given him a name, &c. Where we are not to understand that God gave unto Christ after his resurrection any new name which he had not before. For as before so after, and as after so before, he was and is called the wisdom of God, the power of God, the true light of the world, faithful and true, holy and just, the apostle and high priest of our profession, a priest after the order of Melchisedec, the Saviour of the world, the Prince of peace, the Mediator of the New Testament, the head of the church, the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ, the image of the Father, the Son of God, and God; neither had he any name after his resurrection which he had not before. But by a name is to be understood in this place, glory, and honour, and majesty, and dominion over all things created, as the same word is elsewhere used, Eph. i. 21; so that, when it is said that 'God hath given him a name above every name,' the meaning is, that God, having raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, hath so highly exalted him in the heavenly places, that he hath given him all power both in heaven and earth, all dominion over all creatures whatsoever, and the same glory which he had with him from the beginning; so that now he reigneth and ruleth with him, King over all, and blessed for ever. Now this power, dominion, and glory whereto Christ Jesus after his resurrection was exalted, is further opened and expressed by the apostle, 1, by that subjection and worship which all things created now owe, and at length shall yield unto him, in these words, 'that at the name,' &c.; 2, by that acknowledgment whereby all creatures now ought, and at length shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, unto the glory of God the Father, in these words, 'and that every tongue,' &c. The sum, then, in brief, of the apostle his meaning in these words is this, that God, having raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, hath crowned him with such honour and glory above all creatures in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth, that they all do, or shall bow unto him, be subject under his feet, and acknowledge that he who was cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully handled and crucified, is King, and Lord, and God blessed for ever, unto the glory of God the Father.

In these words, therefore, I observe four principal points: 1. The great honour and glory wherewithal Christ was crowned after his resurrection and ascension, set down in these words, 'and given him a name,' &c. 2. The subjection and worship which all creatures owe, and at length shall yield unto him, set

down as a branch and an end of his glorification in these words, 'that at the name,' &c. 3. The confession and acknowledgment of all creatures, that Jesus Christ crucified is the Lord over all, and that all power belongeth to him, both in heaven and in earth, set down as another branch and end of his glorification in these words, 'and that every tongue,' &c. 4. The issue of the whole, which is, that the whole glorification of Christ redoundeth to the honour of God the Father, set down in these words, 'unto the glory,' &c.

Touching the first point, viz., the great honour and glory wherewithal Christ was crowned after his resurrection, which our apostle here signifieth by the name which God gave unto him above every name, the apostle to the Hebrews giveth most evident testimony thereunto, when he saith, Heb. ii. 9, 'But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, which was made a little inferior to the angels that he might suffer death;' as if the apostle should have said, that Jesus, which in no sort took on him the nature of angels, but the nature of man, even flesh and blood, and mortality, to the end that he might suffer death for our sins, he now being raised from the dead is crowned with honour and glory, even unto him is given the excellency of all dignity, far above all things created whatsoever. The same also is further confirmed by the testimony of our apostle to the Ephesians, where he saith, Eph. i. 20, 21, 'That God raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and domination, and every name that is named, not in this world only, but also in that that is to come,' &c.; where the apostle most plainly sheweth how highly Christ was exalted above all creatures whatsoever, after that God had raised him from the dead. Now, if ye ask me what was that majesty and excellency of dignity wherentoo Christ was exalted after his resurrection, I answer that it was that glory wherewithal Christ, before his passion, prayed to be glorified, when he thus prayed, John xvii. 5, 'Glorify me thou, Father, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' The glory, then, wherentoo Christ was exalted after his resurrection was his own glory, that glory which he had before his incarnation, even before the world was, with his Father; that glory which he had when, being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God. For we know that he was heard in all things for which he prayed of the Father; so that,

having prayed for that glory which he had from the beginning with the Father, the glory whereunto he was exalted was his own glory which he had with the Father from the beginning. Now, if ye ask me again what glory this was which he had with the Father from the beginning, I answer that it was all power both in heaven and in earth. For so our Saviour himself after his resurrection from the dead said, saying, Mat. xxviii. 18, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;’ where, by all power is meant, all authority, all sovereignty over all things created, both in heaven and earth: so that both the angels are his ministering spirits, and with his word he commandeth the foul spirits, and they obey him, and of all men it is true, that unto one he saith Go, and he goeth, and to another Come, and he cometh. Thus, then, it appeareth that Christ, after his resurrection, both was highly exalted unto all honour and glory, and that his glory was and is that absolute lordship and sovereignty which he hath over all creatures in heaven and in earth; yea, he was exalted unto that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. If now again it be demanded whether Christ were exalted unto his glory and dignity according to both his natures, both his Godhead and his manhood, I answer, according to both. According to his Godhead, not as it is considered in itself, but inasmuch as his Godhead, which from his birth unto his death did little shew itself, after his resurrection was made manifest in his manhood; for, as the apostle saith, Rom. i. 4, ‘He was declared mightily to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead:’ even by the resurrection, and after his resurrection from the dead, he, which was thought only to be man, was most plainly manifested likewise to be God. Now, as touching his manhood, he was therein exalted unto highest majesty in the heavenly places, not only shaking off all infirmities of man’s nature, but also being beautified and adorned with all qualities of glory, both in his soul and in his body, yet so that he still retaineth the properties of a true body; for even as he was man he was set at the right hand of the Father, to rule and reign over all, till all his enemies be destroyed and put under his feet. To knit up all in a word, Christ, God and man, after his resurrection, was crowned with glory and honour, even such as plainly shewed him to be God, and was set on the throne of God, there to rule and reign as sovereign Lord and King, till he come in the clouds to judge both quick and dead.

Here, then, is both matter of comfort and consolation unto the godly, and likewise of fear and astonishment unto the wicked and ungodly. For therefore is he ascended into heaven, even to prepare a place for us, that where he is there may we be also; for so himself speaketh, John xiv. 2. And therefore is he exalted far above all men and angels, as in all fulness of gifts and graces, so in glory and majesty, that he may

succour us in all our miseries, and help us in all dangers. Whatsoever infirmities we have, whatsoever persecutions we suffer, whatsoever crosses we endure, we need not be dismayed or troubled. For Christ Jesus, who bore our infirmities, whom the high priests, scribes, and pharisees, and all the Jews persecuted unto the death, who endured the cross and despised the shame, is exalted unto the highest glory for us, and both is able to succour us and will not suffer us to perish. If Christ had not overcome death, and sin, and the world, and the devil; nay, if he had not, as a most triumphant king, led captivity captive, and so crushed them, that though they would yet they cannot hurt us; nay, if he did not now, as Lord and King, so bridle their rage that they cannot prevail against us: then might we well fear death, and sin, and the world, and the devil. But now that he hath overcome all these, and ruleth all things henceforth with his mighty power, so that one hair of our heads cannot fall away without his heavenly will, and nothing can touch us but as he giveth leave, what care of death, what danger of sin, what care of the world, what care of the devil? Let death draw out his sharp arrows against us, let sin assault us and seek to tyrannize over us, let the world hate us and band themselves against us, let the devil rage and lay what battery he can against us, our King and our God which dwelleth in heaven be langheth them to scorn, and our Lord hath them in derision. He saith unto them, ‘Touch not my chosen, and do my children no harm.’ He setteth them their bounds which they cannot pass, and he limiteth their power even as it best pleaseth him. And therefore death shall not deadly wound us, but only transport us unto a life that lasteth ever; sin shall not tempt us above that we be able, but together with the temptation we shall have the issue that we may be able to bear it; the world and wicked instruments of Satan shall either not at all prevail against us, or no farther than shall be for God’s glory and our good; neither shall the devil, rage he never so horribly, be able to stir ever a whit farther than the links of his chain shall be loosed unto him. When Solomon was anointed king over Israel instead of David his father, it is said that ‘all the people came after him, that they piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rang with the sound of them,’ 1 Kings i. 40. Shall the people of Israel thus rejoice at the crowning of Solomon, and shall not we much more rejoice whenas Christ Jesus is placed in heaven at the right hand of his Father, and hath the everlasting sceptre of his kingdom put into his hand? Shall not our souls be filled with joy and gladness for the crown of his glory and honour, which is the Prince of our peace, and the strong Rock of our salvation? Surely the apostle so rejoiced in this crown of his glory, that he bid defiance unto condemnation, and whatsoever accusation could be laid against him: ‘Who shall lay any

thing,' saith he, Rom. viii. 33, 34, 'unto the charge of God's chosen? it is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? it is Christ which is dead, yea, or rather which is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and maketh request for us,' &c. ; where ye see plainly how the apostle, upon the ground of Christ his death, or rather upon the ground of that crown of glory whereunto Christ was exalted after his resurrection from the dead, henceforth feareth neither accusation, nor condemnation, nor whatsoever can be laid unto his charge. And as the apostle doth, so all the children of Christ his kingdom may bid defiance unto accusation and condemnation, and whatsoever can be laid unto their charge, now that Christ sitteth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. The Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof; he is great in Sion, and high above all people. ' Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all that therein is. Thou that dwellest under the defence of the Most High, and abidest under the shadow of the Almighty, say unto the Lord,' &c., Ps. xcii. 1-3, &c.

Now, as this sovereignty of power, and excellency of dignity, wherunto Christ was exalted after his resurrection, may be matter of comfort and consolation unto the godly, so may it be a matter of fear and astonishment unto the wicked and ungodly. For 'he shall bruise his enemies with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel,' Ps. ii. 9. He shall even deal with them as Joshua dealt with the five kings that were hid in the cave, he shall tread them under feet, and make a slaughter not so much of their bodies as of their souls. For as his exaltation into that glory is for the good of his church and faithful people, so is it for the confusion and utter destruction of his enemies. For it is a righteous thing with him to recompence tribulation to them which trouble his children, and to give rest to his children which are troubled. Yea, but what doth this touch us? These judgments we need not to fear; we are no enemies to Christ, we are Christians, and we are baptized into his name. True it is we are Christians, and baptized into Christ his name, and therefore we should die unto sin, and live unto God. But yet see, for all this, whether many of us be not enemies unto Christ. 'Those mine enemies,' saith Christ himself, Luke xix. 27, 'that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me;' where again ye hear the peremptory sentence of death and destruction unto those that are Christ his enemies. But who are enemies to Christ, let Christ himself tell us. 'Those mine enemies,' saith he, 'that would not that I should reign over them.' They, then, are enemies unto Christ which would not have Christ to reign over them. Yea, but we are all very willing that Christ should reign over us. Look then, I beseech you, whether all of us submit ourselves to the sceptre of his kingdom, even to the rule

of his most sacred and holy word, to be ruled and guided thereby in our whole life. For if we do not submit ourselves thereunto, to be ruled thereby, we are, in deed and in truth, of those that would not have Christ to reign over them, whatsoever outward profession we make otherwise. Do we, then, all of us submit ourselves to the sceptre of his kingdom, to be ruled by his holy word? Are there not some who seldom, or not at all, present themselves in the great congregation, to hear the wholesome word of truth, that they might receive instruction thereby; who refuse to hear the Lord speaking unto them in his holy word, and loathe this heavenly manna which is the food of our souls? I mean the recusant, who, refusing to come to these holy assemblies to hear the word preached, which God hath ordained to be the ordinary means of our salvation, submitting not himself to the sceptre of Christ his kingdom, but in effect saith of Christ, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Again, are there not some who, though they come to hear the word preached, yet are so hardened in their sins, that they are not at all softened with the hammer of God's word, but rather are like unto the smith's anvil, which, the more it is beaten with the hammer, the harder it is? I speak not now of such as only come for fashion's sake, or such as think they sit on thorns when they sit at a sermon, especially if it be any longer than they desire; or such as whose thoughts are wandering up and down upon their profits, or their pleasures, or the like, and attend but little unto the word preached; or such as hang down their heads and fall to sleep while the Lord is knocking at the door of their hearts and ears by the ministry of his servants; such might, and should learn so to assemble themselves in the house of God, as Cornelius and his kinsmen, and friends, and family assembled themselves when Peter came to preach unto them: 'We are all here present before God,' saith Cornelius, Acts x. 33, 'to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' So they might and should learn that here they are present before God, to hear and learn all things that are commanded them of God, and therefore that here they should be reverent, diligent, and careful to hear that which is preached and taught out of the holy word. But I say I speak not now of such; but I speak of such as suffer sin to reign in their mortal bodies, and obey it in the lusts thereof, notwithstanding that they be rebuked of their sins out of the holy book of God. I demand, then, hath the covetous man left off to be covetous; hath the drunkard left off to be drunk; hath the thief left off to steal; hath the whoremonger left off to delight in strange flesh; hath the liar left off to lie; hath the blasphemer and swearer left off to blaspheme and swear; because it is written that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor wantons, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor blasphemers, nor liars, shall inherit the kingdom of God? What turning unto God is there from any

sin whereof we have been reproved by a true and an unfeigned repentance of the same sin? Nay, doth not every man go forward in his sin without remorse, be the book of God never so wide opened against it? And can we say that we submit ourselves to the sceptre of Christ his kingdom, while we yield ourselves servants unto sin, and suffer it to reign in our mortal bodies? Nay, certainly, men and brethren, if, when we hear our sins plainly rebuked out of the word, we notwithstanding walk on in our sins, and reform not the wickedness of our ways, we do in effect say unto Christ, We will not have thee to reign over us, and so by our Saviour his own testimony we are enemies to him; and what then remaineth but that he bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel? Beware, therefore, men and brethren, how ye still harden your hearts, when the Lord hath so directed the tongue of the preacher, that your own conscience tells you he hath rightly hit you, and noted your sin. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for he is a consuming fire, and rendereth vengeance unto all them that know not him, and which obey not his gospel. And thus ye see with what honour and glory Christ was crowned after his resurrection, as also what matter of comfort and consolation this may be unto the godly, and contrariwise what fear and astonishment unto the wicked and ungodly. It followeth that in the next place we speak of that subjection and worship which all creatures owe, and at length shall yield unto Christ thus exalted, which is a branch of Christ his glory, and set down here as an end of his glorification, in these words, 'That at the name of Jesus,' &c.

Where by the name of Jesus, we are not to understand the bare name of Jesus, as though it had the virtue in it to drive away devils, or as though at the very sound of it all were to bow their knees; for at the name of Saviour, which is the same with Jesus, none boweth, and the name of Christ, of Emmanuel, of the Son of God, of God, are names no less precious and glorious than is the name of Jesus. True it is, that bowing of the knee at the name of Jesus is a custom which hath been much used, and may without offence be retained, when the mind is free from superstition; but to bow and kneel at the very sound of the name, when we only hear the name of Jesus sounding in our ears, but know not what the name meaneth, savoureth of superstition. By bowing the knee, the apostle here meaneth that subjection and worship which all creatures ought continually to perform, and which all creatures shall perform to Christ in that day, some willingly and cheerfully, as holy men and angels, some unwillingly and to their confusion, as the devils, and wicked men his instruments, for so the Lord by his prophet useth the same phrase of speech, where he saith, Isa. xlvi. 23, 'Every knee shall bow unto me,' that is, shall be subject to me, and worship me.

Here, then, is a duty prescribed, necessarily to be performed of every Christian, which is to glorify him who is exalted into the height of glory, both in our bodies and in our spirits, to worship him with holy worship, to subject ourselves unto him in all obedience unto his heavenly will; for 'worthy is the Lamb that was killed, to receive all power, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise,' Rev. v. 12. The angels in heaven they glorify the name of Jesus, in that they are always ready to execute his will, and to do whatsoever he commandeth them, whereupon they are called 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for their sakes whieh shall be heirs of salvation,' Heb. i. 14. This also is that holy worship wherewith we ought to worship him and to glorify his name, even to be hearers and doers of his word, to obey his will, to walk in his laws, and to keep his commandments. Not the bare and outward eapping and kneeling at the name of Jesus, but principally obeyed unto his will, that is named, is the honour which here he accepteth of us. For as 'not every one that saith unto him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into his kingdom,' so not every one that boweth at the name of Jesus shall enter into his kingdom, but he that doth his will, and walketh in his ways. Saul, when he was sent to slay the Amalekites, thought to honour God greatly by sparing the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto him. But it was said unto him, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 'Hath the Lord as great pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as when his voice is obeyed? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken is better than the fat of rams.' So you haply may think you honour our blessed Saviour greatly when ye bow yourselves at every sound of his name; but behold, to obey his will is better than eapping and kneeling, or all outward ceremonies whatsoever. Yet mistake me not, I beseech you, as though I thought that the names of Jesus, of Christ, of the Lord, of God, of the Father, of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost, were names of ordinary account and reckonings, or to be passed over without reverence, as other names. Nay, whensoever we hear, or speak, or think of them, we are to reverence the majesty of God signified thereby; and fearful it may be to them that think or speak of them profanely, or lightly, or upon each light and trifling occasion, or otherwise than without great reverence and fear, that the Lord will not hold him guiltless. But this I say, that neither the sound of these syllables of Jesus, nor the name of Jesus, should affect us more than any other names of Christ, as though there lay some virtue in the bare word; but whensoever we hear, or think, or speak of him, we are to reverence his majesty, and in the reverent fear of his name, to subject ourselves unto his will. This is a part of that duty whereby we must glorify Christ Jesus.

Men and brethren, let us at iength look at it. He

that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, We pray daily, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' but it is but lip-labour. The angels in heaven are always ready to execute his will; but on earth we follow our own wills, and walk in the ways of our own hearts. We regard not to walk in the way of the Lord, or to hearken to the words of his mouth; we will not obey; we will not incline our ear, but we will go after the counsels and stubbornness of our wicked hearts. Well, 'rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,' 1 Sam. xv. 23, 'and trans-

gression is wickedness and idolatry.' Take heed, and put not off from day to day. Come and learn to know the Lord his will, and be not forgetful hearers, but doers of the word. If we now serve him and do his will, we shall afterwards reign with him; but he that now will not be subject unto his will, let him know that we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and then every knee shall bow unto him. Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and live thereafter.

LECTURE XXXI.

That at the name of Jesus should every knee bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under, &c.—PHILIP. II. 10, 11.

NOW before we proceed unto the next point in the words following, one or two doubts arising from these words are first to be resolved and answered. The apostle saith that God hath given unto Christ, being raised from the dead, 'a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus should every knee bow,' &c., that is, that all creatures should be subject unto him, and worship him. Here, then it may be doubted and demanded, how is it that all creatures are not subject unto Christ, that all creatures do not worship him? For not only the devils in hell, but likewise many wicked men, instruments of Satan here on earth, are so far from being subject unto him, that they are sworn enemies unto him, and to his kingdom, and swell and rage against him, some against him in his own person, and all against him in his members here on earth. True it is, indeed, that Christ hath many enemies, which are not subject unto him, nor worship him, 'for he must reign,' as saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 'till he have put all his enemies under his feet.' where the apostle plainly implieth that Christ hath and shall have enemies, which will not be subject unto him and worship him, even till such time as he shall deliver up his kingdom to his Father, that is, even till he shall come in the last and great day to judge both the quick and the dead in his second coming. Yea, and it is for the glory of his kingdom that still there be enemies unto his kingdom, that so he may be glorified both by the victory which he giveth unto his saints here on earth over these enemies, and likewise by the victory which himself shall have over them in that day, when their faces shall gather blackness and darkness before him, and when he shall adjudge them unto that 'Tophet prepared of old, the burning wherof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a river of brimstone, doth kindle it,' as the prophet speaketh, Isa. xxx. 33. But to answer unto the question, how it is that all creatures are not subject unto Christ, and worship him, seeing God hath given him such a name, even such honour and glory

above all creatures, that all creatures should bow at his name, and be subject unto him, I answer, first, that all creatures ought to bow at his name, and to be subject unto him, even all the powers of darkness, and all such their slaves as have sold themselves to work wickedness in this life, ought to bow unto him, and to worship him. For that law which afterwards was given by Moses unto man to keep, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him,' Dent. vi. 13, was no doubt in the beginning a law both to men and angels, and still continues to be a law, whereby not men alone, but men, and angels, and infernal spirits, are bound to fear and serve him, to worship and obey him, even with holy worship; and therefore is the judgment and condemnation of all them most just who do not obey him that they might be saved.

Secondly, unto the question I answer, that all creatures now are subject unto him, so that unto whom he saith, Go, he goeth, and unto whom he saith, Come, he cometh, and otherwise they stir not, nor cannot. The devil himself toucheth not, nor can touch, either Job, his substance, or his children, or himself, till he give leave, and then no further than he giveth leave, Job i. 12, ii. 6. Nay, he cannot enter into the herd of swine till he give leave, Mark v. 13. He hisseth for the fly that is at the uttermost parts of the floods of Egypt, and for the bee which is in the land of Ashur, as the prophet speaketh, Isa. vii. 18, 19, and then they come and light in all the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorny places, and upon all bushy places; that is, he bringeth the Egyptians and the Assyrians upon the land of Judah, and they come, and they lay the land waste without an inhabitant. And every enemy that invadeth any land, he is but the rod of the Lord his wrath, and the staff of his indignation, neither can this rod strike but where and as he will. The famine which drieth the bones, and fainteth the soul, the pestilence that walketh in the darkness, and destroyeth at the noon day, the sword that devoureth one as well

as another, and all alike, these messengers of his wrath are sent by him for our sins, and they come; when he saith unto them, Go, they go, and when he calleth them back, they return. The like may be said even of sin and of death. Sin reigneth not, nor can it, but in the children of disobedience. Death woundeth not deadly, nor cannot, but only the vessels of wrath and eternal destruction. And of all things in general this is true, that all things are so subject unto Christ, that if he say, 'Hurt not the sea, nor the earth, nor the trees,' Rev. vii. 3, none can hurt the earth, or the sea, or the trees; and if he say to the seven angels, 'Go your ways, and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth,' chap. xvi. 1, 2, then they pour them out upon the earth; that is, if he say, Touch not my children, then nothing can harm them; and if he say, Let the ungodly of the earth come to an end, then they are as dust which the wind scattereth from the face of the earth. As he saith, so is it done, and all things are thus subject unto him; subject, I say, unto him, not by any voluntary subjection, whereby they worship and honour him, and submit themselves unto him, but subject unto him, so that though they would, yet they cannot but do his will, howsoever they do it not to do his will, but only to work their own malice.

Lastly, unto the question I answer, that in the last and great day, when Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, when 'the heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up,' then shall every knee bow unto him, then shall all creatures be subject unto him. 'The sea shall give up her dead which were in her, and death and the grave shall deliver up the dead which were in them; all nations shall be gathered together, and all shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to that they have done, whether it be good or evil.' Then the kings of the earth, which made flesh their arm; then the rich and covetous men of the world, which made the wedge of gold their god; then the whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, sorcerers, blasphemers, and liars; then those churlish Nabals, and unmerciful men which have not fed, nor clothed, nor visited, nor lodged Christ in his poor members; then those that rebelliously have murmured against God for poverty, sickness, or what cross else soever, shall say to the hills, Cover us, and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. But it shall be to no purpose, for all shall stand before him, and fall down before him. The redeemed of the Lord shall fall down before him and worship him, and willingly subject themselves unto him, as unto their Lord and their God. The wicked, and Satan himself, shall fall down before him, and be forced to be subject under his feet, and

to yield to that last sentence as most just, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.' And then, 'when all things are put down under his feet, he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.' Unto the question, then, how it is that all creatures are not subject unto Christ, seeing God hath given him such a name, and crowned him with such honour and glory, that all creatures should bow unto him, and be subject unto him? the answer is, 1, that all creatures, even all absolutely, ought to bow at his name, and to be subject unto him. 2. That even the wicked and ungodly of the earth, and all the powers of darkness are now so subject unto him, that though they would, yet they can do nothing but what his will is. 3. That in the last and great day, all creatures, even all absolutely, shall be subject unto him, holy men and angels willingly subjecting themselves unto him, and worshipping him; and all the rest, though unwillingly, subjecting themselves unto him, and to their final judgment, as just in itself unto them, and from a most just God.

By the first answer we are instructed in a necessary duty, which is, that we ought to be subject unto Christ in obedience unto his heavenly will, and to worship him with all holy worship, walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments. By the second answer we may receive exceeding comfort in Christ Jesus, that though the world hate us, and Satan seek continually like a roaring lion to devour us, yet they can do nothing against us but what he will; they are but his rods to chastise us, and they shall at length be cast into the fire and burnt, but we shall shine as stars in heaven for ever and ever. By the third answer we learn quietly to repose ourselves in the power of his might, who shall subdue all his enemies under him, and give unto us a crown of eternal glory, but in flaming fire render vengeance unto them that have not obeyed his gospel. And let this be spoken for the clearing of the first doubt.

Another doubt is here to be answered, touching that superstitious and fond fancy of purgatory, which some would gladly ground on these words of the apostle. For thus hence they reason:—Saint Paul saith, that unto Christ was given such a name, that at the name of Jesus should every knee bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; but the devils and the damned in hell are so far from bowing unto Christ, that they blaspheme his holy name, and gnash their teeth against him; they, then, which, being under the earth, do bow unto Christ, must needs be those which worship Christ in purgatory: therefore, there is purgatory. But see, I beseech you, the vanity and foolishness of their reason, which they make for the upholding of this dream. The devils, say they, and the damned in hell, are so far from bowing unto Christ, that they blaspheme him, and gnash their

teeth at him; therefore, by the things under the earth which bow unto Christ, must needs be meant the souls in purgatory. I answer: 1. That the devils and damned in hell, howsoever they do blaspheme Christ, yet they ought to bow unto him, and to be subject unto him, as I shewed before by that law which was first given unto them, and still doth bind them, ‘Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him.’ And so the apostle may very well be expounded, that God ‘hath given unto Christ a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus should every knee bow,’ of duty, ‘both of things in heaven,’ &c. And then, what a poor shroud hath purgatory in this place? 2. I answer, that the devils do now bow unto Christ, and are subject unto him. Add unto the former proofs of this assertion, that one testimony out of Luke, chap. viii., where the evangelist, storying the deliverance of one possessed with a devil, sheweth most plainly how the devil, nay, many devils,—for a legion possessed him,—fell thrice prostrate before Christ, and acknowledged his power over them. First, saith Saint Luke the evangelist, ver. 28, the devil cried out and said, ‘What have I to do with thee, Jesus, the Son of God the most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.’ Again, when Jesus had asked the devil his name, the evangelist saith, ver. 30, ‘they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep;’ and again, the evangelist saith, ‘they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into the herd of swine feeding thereby on an hill;’ where ye see how not one, but a legion of devils, not once, but thrice in one miracle, prostrated themselves unto Christ, and acknowledged his power over them. And shall we not think that now much more they do so, when Christ sitteth at the right hand of God in the heavenly places? Yes, Saint James tells us that ‘they fear and tremble,’ chap. ii. 19. A servile fear they are in, and unwillingly they are subject unto him, howsoever they do blaspheme him. False, therefore, is it when they say, that the devils bow not unto him. 3. I answer, that the devils shall be subject unto him in that great and last day; and so the apostle may be understood, and then what help here for purgatory? For thus I understand the apostle:—‘God hath given unto Christ a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,’ now of duty, and shall bow then in that day, some willingly and some unwillingly; both which being truly affirmed even of the devils, inasmuch as now they *ought*, and in that day they *shall* bow and be subject unto him, though unwillingly, what need is there to understand this place of the souls in purgatory? Lastly, the Rhemists note no such thing upon this place, which yet they would have done if it had made aught for that purpose; and Bellarmine quite disclaimeth it, understanding by *things under the earth*, the devils in hell, which, as I have said, now ought, and in that great day shall bow

and be subject unto him. And, indeed, the whole tale of popish purgatory is a mere dream, having no ground at all, either in this or in any other place of Scripture, but is so contrary thereto as nothing more. ‘It is the blood of Christ Jesus that purgeth and cleanseth us from all sin,’ 1 John i. 7, it is not any purging fire which doth it or can do it after this life. Nay, after this life there is but heaven or hell: heaven for them that die in the Lord, for ‘blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: even so, saith the Spirit, they rest from their labours; and their works follow them,’ Rev. xiv. 13; and hell for the wicked and such as forget God, for that is their portion, prepared for them of old with the devil and his angels. Thus having cleared these words of the apostle from these doubts, it remaineth that now we proceed in that which followeth in the apostle. It followeth therefore,

And that every tongue should confess, &c. We have heard of the subjection of all creatures unto Christ Jesus, set down by the apostle as a branch of his glory, and an end of his glorification. Now, in these words the apostle setteth down another branch of Christ his glory, which is the confession and acknowledgment of all creatures that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and sole right commander in heaven and earth; for as every knee shall bow unto him, so every tongue shall confess him, God having given him a name above every name, that every knee should bow unto him, and that every tongue should confess him to be Lord and sovereign King. By *every tongue*, the apostle meaneth not only all nations and languages in the world whatsoever, but every tongue both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; not that things in heaven or things under the earth have tongues, as neither they have knees, but as there in the former words, by every knee both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, is meant all creatures, so here in these words, by ‘every tongue of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,’ is meant all creatures. When it is added, ‘that every tongue should confess,’ the apostle thereby sheweth both what all creatures still ought to do, and also what all creatures shall do in that last and great day. For his meaning is, that all creatures ought still to confess, and at the last shall confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord; even that that Jesus which was crucified, and which made his grave with the wicked in his death, is Lord and God, and that all honour, power, and glory belongeth unto him.

Here, then, we are put in mind of a duty necessarily to be performed of all Christians, which is, not only to be subject and to be obedient to Christ his will, but to confess likewise and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Lord. The angels and the saints in heaven, which stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with long white robes and palms in their hands, they cry aloud, and they say, Rev. vii. 9, ‘Salvation

cometh of our God that sitteth upon the throne, and of the Lamb ; yea, they cease not day or night crying and saying, ver. 12, ‘ Praise, and glory, and wisdom, and thanks, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for evermore. Amen.’ Yea, the powers of darkness themselves ought thus to confess Jesus Christ, that all power, and honour, and might belongeth unto him, inasmuch as they were created, formed, and made for his glory, not only to be shewed in their confusion, but that they might sound forth his praise and glory. The angels and saints in heaven, they do, the devils and damned in hell, they ought to, confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord ; and shall we doubt whether it be man’s duty to confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord ? ‘ With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth man confesseth to salvation,’ saith the apostle, Rom. x. 10 ; where the apostle plainly sheweth, that as faith in the heart, so confession in the mouth, is needful to salvation. The evangelist St John saith, that among the chief rulers of the Jews, ‘ many believed in Jesus Christ, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be cast out of the synagogue,’ John xii. 42. Did they believe in Christ Jesus, but not confess him ? In that they did not confess him, it is a plain argument that their faith was but a weak faith. Haply they began to embrace the truth of Christ, and to be astonished at his miracles, but in that they durst not confess him, it is plain that they did not truly believe in him ; which is yet more plain by that St John farther addeth, ver. 43, ‘ they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,’ which preposterous love, wheresoever it is, there is neither the love of God indeed, nor faith in Jesus Christ. The apostle to Titus, chap. i. 16, telleth us of some that ‘ profess that they know God, but by their works they deny him, and are abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.’ As before we had faith in Christ, but no confession of Christ, so here we have confession and profession of Christ, but no practice of the life of Christ ; and therefore, as their faith was justly argued to be no sincere and sound faith, because they did not confess Christ, so the profession of those of whom the apostle speaketh, may justly be argued to be no sincere and sound profession, because in their lives they practise not that whereof they make profession with their mouths. They seemed to have faith in Christ, but they did not confess Christ, and therefore they may be truly said, neither to have soundly believed in Christ, neither to have confessed Christ. These seem to profess to know God, but by their works they deny him ; and therefore they may be truly said neither to have sincerely confessed Christ, neither to have practised his will. Seeing, therefore, it is so, that both where Christ is not confessed, there Christ is not believed ; and again, where Christ is confessed, there many times his will is not practised ; very behoveful it will be for us,

whose duty it is to confess and acknowledge before all men that Christ Jesus is the Lord, to see what a kind of confession it is which our duty doth require of us. We must, then, here take heed that we do not deceive ourselves with a bare and naked confession of Christ Jesus, with a simple and outward profession of his name and religion, as if all were well, when by an outward show we had bleared the eyes of men ; or, as if we had then performed this duty, whereof I speak, as well as the best, when we have made confession of our faith, and said the Lord’s prayer ; or, when we have been at the church and heard the service, and haply a sermon ; when we have made some fair weather without, howsoever all within be full of rapine, bribery, and excess. Nay, nay, brethren, Christ himself hath told us that ‘ not every one that saith unto him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into his kingdom.’ Nay, he hath pronounced a woe unto such hypocrites as ‘ make clean the outer side of the cup, and of the platter, when within they are full of bribery and excess,’ Mat. xxiii. 25 ; and he hath likened them unto ‘ whitened tombs, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all filthiness,’ ver. 37. It is not, then, the lip-labour of a bare and naked confession of Christ, it is not a simple and outward profession of religion, that will serve the turn, or is acceptable unto God ; it is not the discoursing knowledge of Christ, nor the discoursing talk of his kingdom, which pleaseth the Lord ; but the confession of a Christian ; and that which is here required, is, that out of a faith unfeigned, with our mouths we confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord ; and because he is the Lord, therefore we will not give his honour to another, but will ‘ serve him without fear, in holiness and in righteousness before him all the days of our life.’ The root, then, whence our confession of Christ must spring, if by it we will please the Lord, is an unfeigned faith, for faith is it which maketh us not ashamed, but maketh us bold to confess our Christ in all places. ‘ I believe,’ saith the prophet, ‘ and therefore I speake ;’ and most sure it is that then, and never but then, we do boldly and sincerely confess Christ, and profess his religion, when faith hath fully seized upon our souls, that we believe perfectly in Christ Jesus, for because we believe fully in him, therefore we boldly and freely confess him. Whosoever, therefore, thou art that wilt not, or darest not, confess thy Christ, and profess his religion, for fear of trouble or displeasure, or alteration of the state, or any like respect ; know this, that thy heart is not sound with thy God, and that this is for want of true faith in thee. Let them look unto this, who, for fear of a change, or for fear of displeasure, fear to be too forward in confessing Christ, and professing his name, and therefore draw back the shoulder, and shrink at every blast of wind.

Now, the confession which must spring from this root is, that Jesus Christ is the Lord : the Lord, and therefore his honour not to be given to another ; the

Lord, and therefore to be served in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. ‘Thus saith God the Lord, even he that created the heavens, and spread them abroad,’ &c., to wit, Christ Jesus, ‘I am the Lord, this is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images,’ Isa. xlvi. 5, 8; where we see how our Saviour, Christ, both challengeth that unto himself to be the Lord, and plainly avoucheth that he will not give his honour to another. He, then, that confesseth Jesus Christ to be the Lord, and yet giveth his honour unto another, doth only in words confess that, which in deed and in truth he doth deny. Let them look unto this, that make their prayers and supplications unto the saints in heaven, that worship images, crosses, or what reliques soever: 1 John ii. 2, ‘We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and he is the reconciliation for our sins.’ He sitteth at the right hand of God, and liveth ever to make intercession for us. Whosoever, then, prayeth unto or useth the intercession of any other, be it saint or angel, he giveth Christ his glory to another; as also he doth, who doth worship any other but God, and whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ, seeing it is said, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.’

He likewise that confesseth Jesus Christ to be the Lord, and yet serveth him not in holiness and in righteousness all the days of his life, his confession is in vain, because in deed and in truth he denieth that which in words he doth confess. ‘A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if I, then,’ saith the Lord by his prophet, Mal. i. 6, ‘be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master,’ or a lord, ‘where is my fears?’ Whence it is most plain, that fear and obedience to his will belongeth to the Lord. They certainly, unto whom the Lord by his prophet thus spake, confessed the Lord, which they plainly afterwards shew, taking their reproof hardly, and saying, ‘Wherein have we despised thy name?’ But because they feared not the Lord whom they confessed, because they walked not in his ways, nor kept his commandments, therefore their confession was as no confession, the Lord regarded them not, but his wrath was kindled against them. This, men and brethren, is a thing needful for us to look unto. We would be loath so deeply to be charged, as not to confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord. But if he be the Lord, where is his fear? When we confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord, we confess him to be the sole rightful commander of us, and ourselves to be his servants, him to have all power over us, and ourselves wholly to be his. What meaneth, then, such neglect of conforming ourselves

according to his most holy will, and of yielding obedience unto that daily we are taught, and which we know to be his will? If we give our members as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, which should be as weapons of righteousness unto God, whatsoever confession we make, we are the servants of sin, we are not the servants of Christ the Lord, and we are like to those of whom I spake before, that profess they know God, but by their works do deny him.

O my brethren, if ye did indeed confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord, your souls would be filled with gladness when your mouths were filled with this confession, yea, your very hearts would be warm within you when your tongues were thus talking that Jesus Christ is the Lord; your wills would be framed to his will, your feet would rejoice to come into the courts of his house, and to run the way of his commandments. Jesus Christ is the Lord, deny him not before men; for he that shall deny him before men, shall be denied before the angels of God, Luke xii. 9; and certainly he believeth not, that dares not confess him. Jesus Christ is the Lord; confess him so to be, and give not his honour to any other, to men or angels, much less to stocks or stones; confess him to be the Lord, and serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life. This confession becometh the saints of God, and this is a good confession before God. And ever remember that, that they which will not now thus confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord, shall then, in that last and great day, be forced to confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, when he shall judge his enemies on every side, and render to the wicked according to the wickedness of their ways.

Unto the glory of God the Father. Here is the issue of all, even of our subjection unto Christ, and of our confession that Jesus Christ is the Lord. All this redoundeth to the glory of God the Father; for ‘he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father; and he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father,’ John v. 23; for the Father is in the Son, and whatsoever is done unto the Son, is done also to the Father. Let us, then, so subject ourselves unto Jesus Christ, let us so confess him to be the Lord, as already we have been taught. God hath created us, formed us, and made us for his glory, Isa. xliii. 7. Seeing, then, our subjection unto Christ Jesus, and our confession of his glorious name in such sort as hath been taught, is unto the glory of God the Father, let us be subject unto him in all obedience to his will, and let us, out of an unfeigned faith, confess that he is the Lord, even our Lord.

LECTURE XXXII.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in mine absence, &c.—PHILIP. II. 12.

WHEREFORE, *my beloved, &c.* In these words now following we have the conclusion of the apostle his exhortation unto the Philippians, set down by way of applying Christ his humility and obedience unto his Father unto their use and instruction, and consequently unto ours. In this conclusion of the apostle his former exhortation, the apostle again exhorte the Philippians, and in them us, first, unto humble obedience towards God, ver. 12, 13; secondly, unto humble and modest conversation towards our neighbour, ver. 14, 15, 16; and thirdly, he addeth, as a reason why he thus exhorte them, the comfort and joy which they shall bring unto him in the day of Christ, if they so walk as he exhorte them, ver. 16–18. In the first exhortation, which is unto humility and obedience, or humble obedience towards God, we have first to consider the exhortation itself, ver. 12; secondly, the reason thereof, ver. 13. The exhortation of the apostle unto the Philippians, and in them unto us, is, that we would run forward in the race of righteousness, which leadeth unto salvation, with all humbleness of mind, and in all obedience unto God; for when the apostle saith, ‘Make an end of your own salvation,’ therein he exhorte thus much in effect, that as we have begun in the Spirit, so we would go forward and make an end in the Spirit; as we have entered the way of righteousness, which leadeth unto life, so we would persevere and continue in the same way, and ‘follow hard toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ For by salvation the apostle here meaneth, not, as often elsewhere he doth, that glory and immortality which is laid up for us in heaven, and which is the end of our calling, but he meaneth the whole course of godliness which leadeth unto salvation, the whole path of a Christian life which God hath ordained us to walk in. So that when he saith, ‘Make an end of your own salvation,’ it is as if the apostle had said, Let it not seem enough unto you to have begun well, but continue to walk in those good works which God hath ordained you to walk in; as ye have begun to walk in the way that leadeth unto salvation, so make an end therin, and run unto the end the race that is set before you. When the apostle addeth, ‘Make an end of your own salvation with fear and trembling,’ he sheweth the manner how we must run in the way of righteousness which is set before us, to wit, in all humbleness of mind and reverence, as dutiful children, serving the Lord in fear, and rejoicing in him with trembling, as the prophet speaketh, Ps. ii. 11. Likewise, when he saith, ‘So make an end,’ &c., thereby he meaneth that we must run in this race of righteousness in all

obedience unto God; for so much is implied in the word *so*, as may appear by the coherence of this word with the former, whereon it doth depend. ‘As ye have always obeyed,’ saith the apostle. Whom? To wit, God and his word. As ye have always obeyed God and his word, *so*, in the like obedience to God and his word, ‘make an end of your own salvation with fear and trembling.’ The substance, then, of the apostle his exhortation in this place is this, that we would run forward in the race of righteousness, which leadeth unto salvation, with all humbleness and reverence, and in all obedience unto God.

Now, besides the substance of the exhortation, there are many circumstances whereby the exhortation is amplified and enlarged, and which are, together with the exhortation, to be opened and declared. To comprise, then, the whole, in these words of the apostle I consider these points: First, the ground whereon the apostle doth build his exhortation, which is the humility and obedience of Christ, noted in the word *wherefore*; for it is as much as if the apostle should have said, Seeing such was Christ his humility, and such his obedience, as ye have heard, therefore, my beloved, follow his example, and ‘as ye have always obeyed,’ &c. Secondly, the apostle his kind entreaty of the Philippians, so to win them to hearken to his exhortation, in that he calleth them his beloved, ‘Wherefore, my beloved.’ 3. The apostle his commendation of their former obedience unto God, and to his word, that so he might stir them up to continue their obedience, in these words, ‘as ye have always obeyed,’ to wit, God and his word. 4. The apostle his mild insinuation of a change in them, now in his absence from that which was before in his presence, in these words, ‘not as in my presence only,’ &c. 5. The apostle his exhortation to run forward in the way of righteousness, which leadeth unto salvation, in these words, ‘make an end,’ &c. Lastly, the manner how they should run in this race, which is first in obedience unto God, signified in the word *so*, ‘so make an end,’ &c., and then with all humbleness and reverence, signified in these words, ‘with fear and trembling.’ These be generally the points to be observed out of these words of the apostle. Now let us a little more particularly look into each of them, and see what use we may make of them.

Wherefore, my beloved. In this word *wherefore* is noted, as I told you, the ground whereon the apostle doth build the exhortation that followeth. For it is as much as if the apostle should thus have said, Seeing such was Christ his humility, and such his obedience, as already ye have heard, therefore my beloved,

&c. The ground, then, of the apostle his exhortation unto a reverent and humble obedience towards God in leading a godly life, is the humility of Christ, and his obedience unto his Father. The observation hence is this, that the humility of Christ, and his obedience to his Father, ought to be a sufficient motive and reason unto us, why we should run on the race of holiness and righteousness that is set before us, with all humbleness of mind, and in all obedience towards God. So the apostle thought when he made this the ground of this his exhortation; and so our Saviour himself thought, as appeareth by that exhortation unto the people in the end of one of his sermons, Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me that I am meek and lowly in heart.' And great reason, men and brethren, why we should so think also. For wherefore was Christ humbled? Was it for himself? Nay, he might still have kept that glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and if he had not at all descended from the bosom of his Father, none could any way have impeached him for the same. For it was no robbery for him always to be equal with God, as our apostle speaketh. It was not, then, for himself that he was humbled, but he humbled himself for us, that he might save us which had lost ourselves, and that he might reconcile us unto God, breaking down the partition wall that was betwixt him and us by reason of our sins. So saith the apostle Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true saying, and by all means worthy to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' And so saith St John: 1 John ii. 1, 2, 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and he is the reconciliation of our sins.' Again, why was he obedient unto the Father to fulfil the law? Was it for himself? Nay, 'he never did any wickedness, neither was any guile found in his mouth,' Isa. liii. 9. It was not for himself, but for us, that he might redeem us which were under the law, and purchase righteousness for us. So saith the apostle, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law;' and as the same apostle saith to the Romans, chap. viii. 4, 'that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.' Seeing, then, it was for us that Christ was humbled, and that he was obedient unto the law, and unto the death, great reason it is that his humility and obedience should be a sufficient motive to persuade us unto humility and obedience in the whole course of our life. Should it be, my brethren, a sufficient motive unto us? And why is it not? Why it is not I know not, but that it is not every man seeth it. Our high conceit of ourselves, whether it be of our wisdom, or of our riches, or of our honour, our contentions and vain glory, our delight in our own ways, and our neglect to walk in the ways of the Lord, these and the like testify unto our faces that Christ his humility and obedience little prevail with us to

persuade us unto these holy duties. Oh, my brethren, let this be an healing of our error. So often as we hear or read that Christ thus humbled himself for us, that he became man for us, that he bare our infirmities, that he was led as a sheep unto the slaughter for us, that he made his soul an offering for our sin, and that he made his grave with the wicked in his death for us, let these be so many remembrancers unto us to pluck down our proud peacock's feathers, to put away wrath, contention, pride, vain-glory, and in all meekness of mind to submit ourselves one unto another, and all of us unto our God. So often as we hear or read that Christ became obedient unto his Father in all things that the law required of him, that he fulfilled all righteousness, and never gave over to do the will of his Father till he had tasted and drunk of death's cup, and all for us, let this suffice to stir us up to walk in all dutiful obedience unto our heavenly Father's will. Yea, let us thus hereupon resolve with ourselves, and say unto our own souls, Hath the Son of God, my Christ and my God, vouchsafed to descend from his high throne of glory, to be clothed with my flesh and my skin; to suffer hunger, cold, poverty, and manifold temptations for me; to be slandered, reviled, buffeted, spit upon, condemned, nailed on the cross, and to be buried for me; and shall I bear myself above my brethren; shall I walk with a stiff neck, and disdain my inferiors; or shall I not make myself equal to them of the lowest degree, and pass the time of my dwelling here in fear, and in all lowliness of mind? Hath the Son of God, my Christ and my God, fulfilled all righteousness, done his Father's business, and yielded all obedience unto his Father for me, and shall I kick against him with the heels, shall I draw my neck from under his yoke, and refuse to walk in the ways of his laws, or rather, shall I not conform myself in all obedience to his holy will, and do that which is good and right in his eyes? This use we should make of Christ his humility and obedience unto his Father, and to this end he maketh it the ground of his exhortation in this place. It followeth:—

Wherefore, my beloved. The second thing which I observe in these words of the apostle was his kind and loving entreaty of the Philippians, signified in that he calleth them his beloved; which kind entreaty of them he useth, the rather to win them to hearken unto his exhortation. Here, then, is a note for us whom God hath set apart unto the holy work of his ministry, to wit, that we should not only be careful to instruct them that hear us in the wholesome words of truth, but that likewise we should seek in all kind and loving sort to win them unto that wherein we do instruct them. Hereupon are those kind and lovesome speeches so often used in the writings of the apostles, 'my brethren,' 'my beloved,' 'my babes,' 'my little children,' 'dearly beloved,' 'dear brethren,' 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' and the like. Not to speak of other places, this one plac-

of our apostle might suffice sufficiently to instruct us in this lesson ; where the apostle doth not only exhort the Philippians to walk in the way of godliness with humbleness of mind, and in obedience unto God, and strengthen his exhortation both by the example of their own former obedience, and by the example of Christ his humility and obedience, but in all kind and loving sort he proposeth his exhortation, calling them his beloved, that so he might the rather win them to hearken to his exhortation. For even so the dispensers of God his holy mysteries should not only labour in a godly care to teach them that hear them the words of truth in all evidence of the Spirit, and to confirm and strengthen the same out of the sacred worth of truth, but further, they should seek, with all kind speeches, and in all loving manner, to lead them forth unto the waters of comfort, and to bring them unto Christ Jesus. And here, haply, a man that should long beat upon this point, and enlarge it to the full, might have great applause in many places, especially there where the exception against their teacher is, that he is too sharp, and that he presseth the judgment of God against sin too sore, and too vehemently. Hear, then, I beseech you, a lesson for you that are hearers out of this place.

As we that are the ministers of the Lord for your comfort are hence taught to strive in all kind and loving sort to bring you unto Christ Jesus, so you that hear us are likewise hence to learn so to carry yourselves, as that we may speak unto you as unto our brethren, and unto our beloved. If the love of God be not in you indeed, how can we speak unto you as unto our beloved ? If you honour not God, nor keep his commandments, how can we speak unto you as unto little children ? If ye be not joined with us in one faith, and in one hope in Christ Jesus, how can we speak unto you as to our brethren ? Nay, I say more unto you, if ye know not us that labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; if ye have us not in singular love for our work's sake, how can we speak unto you as unto our beloved ? If, when we labour to beget you in the faith, and to present you before God blameless in that day, you either stop your ears at the voice of our charming, charm we never so wisely, or speak evil of us as of evil doers, can we speak unto you as unto our babes and little children ? If you embrace not the truth which we preach unto you, but rather hate us for the message which we bring unto you, can we speak unto you as unto our dear brethren ? Nay, certainly ; if ye will have us to come unto you with kind speeches, and in all loving manner, with 'my beloved,' 'my little children,' 'my dear brethren,' then must ye study so to approve yourselves, both unto God and men, as that we may speak unto you as unto our beloved, unto our brethren, &c. Otherwise, as Christ came not unto all with this, 'fear not, little flock,' but unto some with this, 'O generation of vipers, how can ye speak good things, when ye are evil ?' and as the apostle

came not to all with this, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' but unto some with this, 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth ?' so ye must look that, as sometimes we come in love and in the spirit of meekness, so sometimes we should come unto you with a rod, and with a woe unto such as obey not the gospel of Christ Jesus that they may be saved. Men and brethren, our heart's desire is that ye may be saved in the day of Christ, and we watch for your souls as they that must give accounts unto God for them ; have ye care that we may do it with joy, and not with grief. We are loath to come unto you with a rod ; we had rather come in love, and in the spirit of meekness ; have ye care that we may come unto you, and that we may speak unto you as unto our beloved. If we sometimes sharply reprove sin, it is for your sakes, that we may reclaim the sinner from wandering out of the right way ; and again, if sometimes we restore such as are fallen with the spirit of meekness, it is for your sakes, that we may bind up the broken-hearted, and minister a word of comfort unto the troubled and afflicted soul. Both, I mean sharpness and meekness, the rod and love,—both, I say, in their due places is needful ; and wise discretion in them both is most needful. And so I come to the third point.

As ye have always obeyed. What ! the apostle ? in falling down unto him, and kissing his feet, as is now done unto that man of sin ? Nay, the apostle here commendeth their former obedience unto God, and unto his word, after such time as they had received the gospel of Christ Jesus. And this he doth to stir them up to continue their obedience, that as they had begun well, so they might now go forward as they had begun. Whence we are taught, that it is not enough to begin well, and for a time to embrace the truth, and to obey the gospel of Christ Jesus, and afterwards to quench the Spirit, and to suffer ourselves to be entangled in the filthiness of the world ; but, having begun in the Spirit, we must go forward in the Spirit, and having begun to love and like the truth, we must not fall from our first love, but hold fast the same, and continue therein. Whereupon are those often exhortations in the apostles to continue in the faith, to continue in the grace of God, to continue in the things that we have learned, to hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering, and with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. The reason hereof is, the school of Christ is not a school of idleness, or a school of non-proficiency, but the scholars of Christ his school they must follow the truth in love, and they must in all things grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ, as the apostle showeth, Eph. iv. 15. And therefore our Saviour Christ himself told the Jews that believed in him, saying, John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, ye are verily my disciples, and shall know the truth.' They, no doubt, unto whom he spake, had

begun well, and had embraced the truth; but he telleth them that if they will be his scholars they must continue as they have begun, and they must grow forward and increase in all knowledge and spiritual understanding: a lesson as needful to be taught in these our days as any other; for we see by our own experience that the word of the Lord is of such majesty, and so powerful, that it draweth oftentimes the veriest miscreants that be unto a liking of it, and causeth them many times to do many things well. But, as it is in the parable of the seed in the gospel, Mat. xiii., some receive the word with joy, but when persecution comes they are offended; others hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke it, that it is made unfruitful; in others, the evil one cometh and catcheth the word that was sown in their heart; and in a great many the liking of the word, and the obedience thereunto, is but like unto a flash of lightning, come and gone again almost in a moment. For a day, or for a month, or haply for a year or two, they will hearken and obey; they will make a good show of loving and liking the word, and many things they will do well; but after a while they will loathe this heavenly manna, and in their hearts return unto the flesh-pots of Egypt, or, as Peter speaketh, 2 Peter ii. 22, 'With the dog they will return unto his vomit, and with the sow unto her wallowing in the mire.' Men and brethren, we must not be like unto such men; for, as Peter speaketh in the same place, ver. 21, 'it had been better for such men not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment given unto them.' We must have tasted of the good word of God, and, having begun to forsake the corruptions that are in the world through lust, continue in the grace of God, and grow forward from grace unto grace till we be perfect men, and come unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ. Having begun to have a liking of the word, and to desire the preaching thereof, we must take heed that we grow not weary of it; but the more we have it, the more our souls must long after it; and the more we hear it, the more we must grow in obedience unto it, to frame our lives according thereto. We must not here stand at a stay, much less must we go backward; we must go forward, and we must prick hard unto the mark of the high calling that is set before us: for in the way of godliness that is most true which is so common, not to go forward in that way is in truth to go backward. But I shall have occasion again to speak of this point in handling the exhortation.

To leave, therefore, this point; here it may be demanded how the apostle saith that the Philippians had always obeyed: 'As ye have always obeyed.' For in that the apostle doth admonish them, every man to esteem other better than himself, as ver. 3, and to do all things without murmuring and reasoning, as ver.

14, he plainly signifieth that there were many faults amongst them, even contention, vain-glory, murmuring, reasoning, and the like. How then doth he give them this testimony, that they had always obeyed? Lied the apostle unto them, or did he flatter them? God forbid; 'let God be true, and every man a liar.' He lieth not unto them, neither doth he flatter them, and yet their obedience unto God, and unto his word, was not perfect; for no doubt such faults were amongst them, as already we have spoken of. In this sense, then, we are to understand the apostle, when he commendeth the Philippians as having always obeyed God and his word; not as if there had nothing lacked in their obedience; for 'in many things we sin all,' James iii. 2; and 'if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' 1 John i. 8; but, therefore, are they said always to have obeyed, because, howsoever their obedience in itself was unperfect, yet was it unto them reputed as perfect, because through faith they were engrafted in Christ, and for his sake their very desire to live godly was accepted with God as a life most holy. For such is the fruit of our communion with Christ, that being engrafted into his body, and made bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, through him, and for him, our faith in him is accounted to us for righteousness, and our very desire to live godly in this present world, is accounted unto us for holiness of life. If there were no other proof for this point, but even this whereof I speak, that the apostle here maketh reckoning of the Philippians as having always obeyed, though there lacked much in their obedience, because they believed in Christ, and desired to live godly, it were enough; but the Scriptures everywhere witness the same.

Here, then, we have an exceeding great comfort in Christ Jesus, that howsoever our obedience be unperfect, yet, if we believe perfectly in Christ Jesus, and study to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, it is accounted as if we had always obeyed. Our iniquities are forgiven, our sins are covered, our infirmities are passed over, our unrighteousness is not imputed unto us; only that which we have well done is had in remembrance, and if we have given but a cup of cold water in his name, it loseth not the reward. This is that which doth and may uphold our weary and fainting souls, which otherwise would fall under their burdens; and this is that which may and ought to persuade us to 'follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14.

Not as in my presence only, but now much more in mine absence. In these words the apostle lightly toucheth a defect in their obedience, that it was not altogether such now in his absence from them, as it was when he was present with them; but he doth not touch it as with purpose much to note them for it, but his drift rather is in these words to instruct them in the quality of their obedience, that it ought not to be feigned,

as service only to the eye, but it ought to be sincere, and from a pure heart, as unto the Lord, who seeth all and is present everywhere.

Here one or two things may be noted, but only by the way, because the apostle doth only lightly touch them, and as it were, by the way, advise us of them. 1. In that the apostle implieth a change in them now in his absence from them, which was not in his presence with them, thence we may note how requisite the presence of the pastor with his people is. True it is, that the apostle was not their pastor, but sent to preach unto the Gentiles in all places, and Epaphroditus was their minister, who remained with them after Paul's departure from them. But if, in Paul's absence from them, when yet their minister was present with them, they began in a short space somewhat to decline, how can we think but that they must needs decline where their pastor is never with them? Where prophesying faileth, the people perish; and when the pastor is not present, the wolf cometh, and the flock is scattered.

2. In that the apostle only lightly toucheth a defect in their obedience, but not with purpose much to note it in them, we may note what care is to be taken, that we do not sharply censure every defect or fault which is in the godly. Some things in them must be lightly passed over, and they must be drawn on with all kindness and meekness to run on in the race that is set before them. The godly is admonished by a word, but the wicked goeth on in his folly, and careth not what is said.

But chiefly, hence we are to note the quality of our

obedience unto our God, that it ought not to be feigned, as service to the eye, but sincere, and from a pure heart, as unto him that seeth all, and is present everywhere. Which of us is there that will command that servant, which is only an eye-servant, which will work well in his master's sight, but not at all when he is absent? Nay, we will all condemn such a servant. But let us take heed that therein we do not give judgment against ourselves. If only we make an outward show of holiness, and serve not the Lord with our whole hearts, making his law our delight, and a single obedience thereunto our chief desire, what are we but eye-servants; and our portion, what shall it be but the portion of hypocrites? Beloved, our God whom we serve is not as man; he seeth all things, he is present everywhere, he searcheth the hearts and the reins, and he understandeth all our thoughts long before they be conceived. It is no halting with him. Whatsoever we do in the darkness, it is unto him as if it were done in the light; for the darkness and light to him are both alike. Gehazi may offend when Elisha sees not, and may hope to conceal it from him, because he sees it not. But if Elisha can descry his fault, how much more can our God descry all our ways, how hiddeu soever they be? Let us therefore walk before him with a single heart; let us serve him in spirit and in truth; let our obedience unto him, and unto his law, spring from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from an unfeigned faith. Such obedience he requireth of us; and such obedience is the way wherein we must walk to our heavenly Jerusalem.

LECTURE XXXIII.

So make an end of your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you, &c.—PHILIP. II. 12, 13.

MAKE an end of your own salvation. The Rhemists read thus out of the vulgar translation, 'work your salvation;' out of which reading, that doctrine of salvation by works is by some in part maintained. Doth our apostle, then, is this place teach us that we are to work our salvation, so that by the merit of our works we may obtain salvation? Surely in other places of his Epistles, he teaches us a quite contrary doctrine. 'By grace,' saith the apostle, Eph. ii. 8, 9, 'are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast himself.' In which place see, I beseech you, how the apostle setteth down the grounds of our salvation. Grace there is the first ground of our salvation. 'It is God that justifieth us,' and saveth us; salvation is his gift, as the apostle here saith. But why doth God save us? Surely in respect of ourselves we are saved freely by his grace, and according to his mercy; in respect of Christ in-

deed we are saved by the merits of his death and passion. He hath bought us with a great price, even with the price of his own precious blood, which he shed for the remission of our sins. But we ourselves have no part in this payment. In respect of ourselves we are freely, through the exceeding riches of his favour and grace towards us, saved. Faith, that is the next occurrent in our salvation—'by grace we are saved through faith'—for faith is that hand whereby we take hold on salvation reached unto us by grace. Here, then, ye see how salvation is both given and taken; given by God, and taken by us. It is given by God by grace; it is taken by us by faith. What, then! have we no part in the purchase of our salvation? No, surely; faith, whereby we are saved, and salvation itself, they are the gift of God. What, have our works no interest in the meriting of our salvation? No; 'by grace we are saved, through faith,' not any way of ourselves, nor of our works. Why? Lest

any man should boast himself. For as the same apostle reasoneth, Rom. iv. 2, 'If Abraham were justified by works, he hath wherein to rejoice, but not with God.' Why not with God? Because 'to him that worketh,' or meriteth by his works, 'the wages is not counted by favour, but by debt,' ver. 4. And therefore in another place, chap. xi. 6, thus he reasoneth, 'if of grace, then not of works, else were grace no more grace; but if of works, then no more of grace, or else were work no more work.' So that when the apostle here saith, that by grace we are saved, it is even thereby plain that we are not saved by our works; yet he putteth down both, saying, that 'we are saved by grace, not of works.' Again, in his epistle to Titus, chap. iii. 5, 'God,' saith he, 'our Saviour, hath saved us, not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy,' &c. Where again you see the author of our salvation is God our Saviour: the cause which moveth God to save us, his mercy, not our good works. I might here likewise produce the whole disputation of our apostle in his epistles to the Romans, and to the Galatians, where at large he disputeth the question, and plainly resolveth that we are justified and saved freely by grace through faith in Christ his blood, and not by our works, wrought according to the law. But I purpose not any large discourse upon this point. By this which already hath been said, ye see how the apostle, in other of his epistles, teacheth clean another doctrine than salvation by works; for he teacheth that we are saved freely, by grace, through faith; not of ourselves, not of works; without the works of the law.

How then? Is the apostle contrary to himself? Doth he here bid us work our salvation, as if by our works we might merit our salvation, and elsewhere tell us that our salvation is not of works, but of grace? God forbid that we should so say or think. The Spirit, whereby the apostle spake both here and elsewhere, is always one and the same, and is not changed. He is the Spirit of truth, and directed the apostle his tongue and pen into all truth, so that he is not anywhere contrary to himself, but here, as elsewhere, delivereth the same truth. Look we, then, a little into the words, and into the meaning of the words, in this place of the apostle. Here, then, we are to note, 1. That it is not simply said, 'work your own salvation,' but 'work out,' or 'finish,' or 'make an end of your own salvation.' For the word here used doth properly signify not simply to work, but to work out, to finish, to make an end of a thing. So it is used by the apostle, where he saith, Eph. vi. 13, 'Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to resist in the evil day, and having finished all things, stand fast.' Again, when it is said, 'work out,' or 'finish,' or 'make an end of your own salvation,' by salvation is not meant, as often elsewhere, that price of our high calling, that crown of immortality which at

the end of our race is laid up for him that overcometh and continueth unto the end; but by salvation is meant the whole course of a godly life which leadeth unto salvation. So that when he saith, 'make an end of your salvation,' he doth exhort us thus much in effect, that as we have entered the race of righteousness, which leadeth unto salvation, so we would run on in the same race unto the end, and fully finish our course in doing such good works, as God hath ordained that we should walk in them.

The thing, then, which hence is to be noted from our apostle touching good works, is not the merit of our salvation by our works, but that good works are the way which God hath ordained us to walk in; and in doing whereof he would have us to finish the whole course of our life. And this we do most gladly teach everywhere, and heat upon in all our sermons, and in all our exhortations; only we are careful to teach you the truth touching good works, namely, that they are not the causes of, but the way which leadeth unto, salvation. Salvation, it is the gift of God, given us by Jesus Christ, through faith in his name. So our Saviour himself telleth us, saying, John x. 27, 28, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life.' For, as it is in another place, chap. xvii. 2, 'God gave him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all them that believe in him.' Salvation, then, is the gift of God, given by Christ, through faith in him; it is not any way caused or merited by our works; yet good works are the way which God hath ordained us to walk in unto salvation. And this it is plainly proved out of the places before alleged: for the apostle in the place to the Ephesians, chap. ii. 8-10, having set that down that we are 'saved by grace through faith, not of works,' immediately after he telleth us that 'we are the Lord his workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them.' Likewise in the place to Titus, chap. iii. 5, having set that down that God 'hath saved us, not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy,' immediately after he speaketh thus unto Titus, ver. 8, 'This I will that thou shouldest affirm, that they which have believed in God might be careful to shew forth good works.' By which places it doth appear, that howsoever our good works are not the cause, or the means of our salvation, yet they are that way which leadeth unto salvation; yea, and that way wherein if we do not walk we cannot be saved. So saith our Saviour himself, John xv. 2, 'Every branch that beareth not fruit in me, the Father taketh away, and it is cast into the fire, and burnt.' He doth not say, every plant that is not planted in me, albeit that likewise be most true, but every branch that beareth not fruit in me. What fruit? Even 'the fruit of the Spirit, which is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth,' as the apostle speaketh, Eph. v. 9, 'Every branch that beareth not such fruit

in me, he is taken away and cast into the fire, and burnt.' To like purpose is that of the apostle, where he saith, Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without the which no man shall see the Lord.' And to the like purpose now many places might, and ordinarily are, by us produced in our sermons.

Here, then, first, I beseech you to beware of such as traduce us, and the doctrine which we preach, as if by preaching of faith we had banished good works, and as if we were so far from exhorting men to good works in our sermons, that either we mention them not, or condemn them; for such there are, that are not ashamed to say, that now we are afraid to handle the doctrine of good works; that we have preached salvation by faith so long, that we have banished good works out of the country; that either we dare not speak of good works, or, if we do, yet so coldly, that as good never a whit, as so barely and coldly. But beware of such; for, having their foolish hearts seduced to believe lies, they speak evil of the way of truth, which they know not, and of us, whom either they will not at all hear, or with such enchanted ears that they pervert whatsoever things are spoken unto their own destruction. Such, if they would, they might hear and know that these are false suggestions, wherewith they slander us and the truth which we teach. For we preach both faith and works, and in all places we exhort all men that they abound in every good work. But why is it that they thus traduce us and our doctrine? Forsooth because we teach that our works are no causes of our salvation. And are we then thus to be traduced because we tell you the truth? We tell you that which the Scriptures have taught us, and we bring with us the evidence thereof to confirm that which we teach. We dare not challenge any part of our salvation as due unto our works, because all the honour thereof belongeth to the Lord, whose free gift it is according to his mercy. But the way wherein God hath ordained us to walk unto salvation, we say, is holiness of life, without which no man shall see the Lord. This the Scriptures teach us, this we teach you; beware, therefore, of such deceivers as tell you otherwise.

Again, if good works be the way which God hath ordained us to walk in, and if without holiness of life no man shall see the Lord, then walk with God, as Enoch did, in holiness and righteousness. You believe in Christ Jesus, shew forth the fruits of your faith; your works must testify your faith both unto yourselves and unto us; for it is a vain and a dead faith where no fruits of holiness of life do follow. A tree is known by his fruit; a good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they walk after the Spirit, and they bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Beloved, God hath sent a time wherein to try the faith and religion of such as he hath enabled

to do some good unto his children. Now he looketh that we should shew forth the fruits of faith, and the tokens of religion, by shewing mercy and compassion upon our poor afflicted and distressed brethren: James i. 27, 'Pure religion, and undefiled, before God, even the Father, is this, That we visit the fatherless and widows in their adversity, and that we keep ourselves unspotted of the world.' If, therefore, there be any faith, if there be any religion, if there be any bowels of compassion in you, withdraw not your morsels from the poor, nor your relief from the needy. According to that wherewithal God hath blessed you, be it small or great, be ready to do good and to distribute, laying up for yourselves a good foundation in heaven. Blessed is he whom the loins of the poor in their adversity blesseth. Generally, this I exhort, that ye study to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and to glorify God by the holiness of your conversation; for know this, that whom God hath justified, forgiving their sins and iniquities, them also hath he sanctified, that they serve him in holiness and in righteousness; and whom he hath sanctified, them also, and them only, he glorifieth in the kingdom of his Son. As he then which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Hereby ye shall know that ye are the sons of God, if ye walk as he hath walked, and keep his commandments; and this is a sure witness that ye belong not unto him, if ye delight in unrighteousness, and defile yourselves with the unclean conversation of the wicked and ungodly. Give, therefore, all diligence to make your calling and election sure; sure, I say, unto yourselves and to your own souls, by walking in such holiness of life as God in Christ Jesus hath ordained you to walk in; and thus much of that holy course and race of godliness wherein the apostle exhorted us to run, when he saith, *Concicite salutem, &c.*

'Make an end,' &c. What it is whereunto the apostle in these words doth exhort us, in part we have already heard by the way wherein he prescribeth us to walk. The way which leadeth unto salvation being holiness of life, the apostle exhorteth us to walk in this way, to run in this race. Now it is to be observed that the apostle doth not only prescribe the way which leadeth unto salvation, and exhort us to walk and run in that way, but he exhorteth us to run on in the same race unto the end, and fully to finish our course, in doing such good works as God hath ordained that we should walk in. Whence we are to learn this lesson, that we must not only begin in the Spirit, and grow forward likewise from grace unto grace, but we must persevere and continue unto the end, that as the beginning and progress were in the Spirit, so the end also may be in the Spirit, that after the race run we may have eternal life. It is a good thing to begin well; but how little it profiteth us unless we continue, let the example of Lot's wife, whose temporal punishment, because she looked back unto Sodom, is regis-

tered in the Old, and the example of Judas, the betrayer of Christ, whose fearful end, because he went astray from the ministration and apostleship which he had obtained with the rest of the apostles, is registered in the New Testament, bear witness. ‘Know ye not,’ saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 24, ‘that they which run in a race, run all, yet one receiveth the prize?’ namely, he that runneth to the end. ‘So run,’ saith the apostle, ‘that ye may obtain.’ How is that? that is, to the end. Run to the end, that ye may obtain the prize; for none are crowned but they that strive as they ought to do, 2 Tim. ii. 5. Now, who are they that strive as they ought to do, but they that without fainting and failing in the way hold out unto the end? In most miserable case then are they, that, like the church of Ephesus, forsake their first love, that is, that having once followed the truth in love, and embraced pure religion, and walked in the paths of righteousness, do afterwards fall away, and run themselves upon the rocks, either of errors in opinion, or of corruption in life. ‘No man,’ saith Christ, Luke ix. 62, ‘that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is apt to the kingdom of God.’ And the apostle saith further, 2 Pet. ii. 21, that ‘it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment given unto them.’ The reason is given by the apostle, Heb. x. 26, 27, ‘For if we sin willingly after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and violent fire, which shall devour the adversaries.’ ‘Take heed therefore, brethren, lest at any time there be in any of you an evil heart, and unfaithful, to depart away from the living Lord: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we keep sure unto the end the beginning wherewith we are upholden,’ chap. iii. 12, 14. Let us run with patience the race all out that is set before us. Our Saviour Christ did so before us, ‘who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame,’ chap. xii. 2. And shall we be weary and faint in our minds? We serve a most bountiful Lord, which giveth us all things liberally; let us serve him with all that we have. We serve a most loving Lord, who will not change his favour for ever; let us not serve him for a time, but for ever. And this let us know for a surely, that if at our last end, when death doth summon us to yield our bodies unto the grave, and our spirits into the hands of him that gave them, if then with Paul we can say, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept my faith,’ we shall find more sound joy and sure comfort herein, than in all things else under the cope of heaven whatsoever; for he that endureth unto the end, he shall be saved,’ saith our Saviour Christ, Mat. xxiv. 13. And again, Rev. ii. 26–28, ‘He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over nations: and he shall rule

them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken. Even as I received of my Father, so will I give him my morning star.’ Make an end therefore of your own salvation.

Now, before we proceed unto the manner how we are to run in this race, and to finish this course, a doubt arising from the apostle’s exhortation is first to be resolved and answered. The apostle, as ye see, exhorteth us to make an end of our own salvation, to run on the race of righteousness which leadeth unto salvation, outright unto the end. Whereupon, some do gather that our free will is here called upon, that is, that we are not wholly and only assisted by grace in the way of salvation, and in the works that lead thereto, but that it is in us to consent unto the grace which is offered, and that we of ourselves, being holpen with grace, by the power of our free will, are able to work the things that are good and acceptable unto God. For why else, say they, doth the apostle exhort us to work out our own salvation, if in us there be no power at all to work? And generally they do conclude, that all admonitions, exhortations, reproofs, precepts, promises, and threatenings in the Scriptures, are in vain, if free will in man be not granted, by the power whereof he may, together with grace, work that which is good. The doubt then is, whether this exhortation of our apostle do not imply that we, by the power of our free will, are able, partly of ourselves, to make an end of our own salvation, and to run the race of righteousness which leadeth to salvation. The resolution and answer whereunto is, that it doth not at all imply any such thing, which yet more clearly will appear, if first we shew the frivolousness of their whole reason, drawn from admonitions, exhortations, &c., in general, which is this: if it be not, say they, in our own power to do the thing which is good, and whereunto we are exhorted and admonished, &c., then in vain are admonitions, exhortations, precepts, reproofs, and the like. But see the vanity of their reason! Are not admonitions and the like needful, if it be so that it be wholly of grace, and no way of ourselves to do those good things whereunto we are exhorted? It is as if they should say, If the increase of the earth be wholly the blessing of the Lord, then it is not needful for the husbandman to till his ground; if faith be wholly the gift of God, it is not needful to come to hear the word preached, &c., for as he giveth corn, and wine, and oil, and all things needful for this life, but yet by such means as he hath ordained thereto, and as faith is his gift, but yet given to us by the means of hearing the word preached, so God worketh in us both to will and to do those things whereunto he exhorteth and admonisheth us, but by the means of such admonitions, exhortations, and the like. Howsoever, then, it be not in our own power to do the good things whereunto we are exhorted in holy Scripture, yet admonitions and exhortations there used are therefore needful, because they are the means

whereby God worketh his graces. Again, if we look into the book of God, we shall easily see that all these things whereunto we are exhorted, they are wholly given of God by grace in Christ Jesus, and are no way of ourselves. To take a little view thereof, the Lord by Joel exhorteth or commandeth, saying, chap. ii. 12, ‘ Turn you unto me, with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning;’ and yet Jeremiah sheweth plainly that conversion unto the Lord is wholly the gift of the Lord, when he thus prayeth, chap. xxxi. 18, ‘ Convert thou me, and I shall be converted, for thou art the Lord my God.’ Likewise our Saviour Christ exhorteth, Mat. xi. 28, ‘ Come unto me, all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you;’ and yet he sheweth plainly, that to come unto him is wholly from the Father, when he thus saith, John vi. 44, ‘ No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.’ In another place, Luke xii. 15, he exhorteth, saying, ‘ Take heed and beware of covetousness;’ yet, to do thus is wholly from the Lord, as the prophet sheweth by that his prayer unto the Lord, Ps. cxix. 36, ‘ Incline mine heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.’ Generally the prophet exhorteth to fly from evil, and to do the thing that is good, Ps. xxxvii. 27; and James calleth us, that to do good is wholly from the Lord, saying, chap. i. 17, ‘ Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,’ &c. The like is to be said of reproofs. Christ reproved the eleven of their unbelief and hardness of heart, Mark xvi. 14; and yet the prophet sheweth that it is the Lord that taketh away the stony heart out of our body, and giveth us an heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; and the apostle, that faith is the gift of the Lord. The like is to be said of all precepts, promises, threatenings, reproofs, admonitions, exhortations, and the like in holy Scripture. The Lord useth them all as means to work his own will in us, and giveth unto us whatsoever he requireth of us. He setteth down laws and statutes, not as if it were in our own power to keep them, but that we may know what to ask of him, and with the prophet to say, ‘ Oh be gracious unto thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.’ He promiseth good things to those that will obey him, not as if it lay in us to obey him if ourselves would, but that he may work such a will in us by his promises. He admonisheth and exhorteth us, not as if we were able of ourselves to will or do the thing, but that so we may look into our own weakness, and turn

unto him, and he may heal us. You see, then, how vain their whole reason, drawn from admonitions, exhortations, and the like, in general is; for, that neither they argue any power in us of ourselves to do good, neither are they needless and vain, because they are the means whereby the Lord worketh in us, both to will and to do that which we are commanded and exhorted. Now to the reason, drawn in particular from this exhortation, in brief I answer, that albeit the apostle exhorts us to work out our own salvation, yet it doth not follow that it is at all in our power so to do. For as it followeth in our apostle, it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do, even of his good pleasure. The apostle, therefore, exhorteth us to make an end of our own salvation, not for that we are able to do so, but to teach us to fly unto him who worketh in us, both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure.

Now let us make this use of that which hath been spoken for the resolving of this doubt. It is not in our own power, we see, to fly the evil we are forbidden, to do the good we are commanded, or to embrace the virtuous and godly life whereunto we are exhorted, but wholly from grace, only from the Lord. So often, then, as we hear or read any precepts or laws in the book of God, let us therein acknowledge our duties, and seeing it is not in our power to keep them, let us fly unto our God, and pray to him, Lord, give me grace to do that thou commandest, and then command me what thou wilt! So often as we hear or read any promises or threatenings, let us therein acknowledge our own frowardness, and seeing it is not in us to bend at promises or threatenings, unless he touch us with his Holy Spirit, let us fly unto our God, and pray unto him, Lord, take from me my hard and stony heart, and give me for it a soft and fleshy heart, that thy promises and thy threatenings may work in me obedience to thy will! So often likewise as we hear or read of admonitions or exhortations, let us therein acknowledge our own infirmities; and seeing we cannot of ourselves will or do the thing whereunto we are exhorted, let us fly unto our God, and pray unto him, Lord, frame my will according to thy blessed will, that I may do what thy will is! And to conclude this point; seeing we cannot run this race whereunto the apostle exhorteth us, but God must work in us both the will and the deed, let us fly unto God, and pray unto him, Lord, sanctify me with thy Holy Spirit, that, by thy grace guiding me, I may walk in those good works which thou hast ordained me to walk in unto my life’s end!

LECTURE XXXIV.

With fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure.

—PHILIP. II. 12, 13.

WITH fear and trembling. From these words some* there are that gather that uncomfort-

* Rhem. in loc.

able doctrine of the uncertainty of our salvation, affirming it to be pride and presumption to dare to be so bold as to be assured of our salvation, and clean

contrary to the teaching of the apostle in this place. So that the meaning of the apostle, by their judgments, in this place is this, that we should so work our salvation that yet we should always doubt of our salvation. But how far this is wide of the apostle's meaning may easily appear by those manifold Scriptures, whereby the certainty of our salvation is affirmed, and consequently this uncomfortable doctrine of the doubting of our salvation is utterly overthrown: 'I am sure,' said Job, chap. xix. 25-27, 'that my Redeemer liveth, and he shall stand the last upon earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet shall I see God in my flesh: whom I myself shall see, and mine eyes shall behold, and none other for me.' Lord, how this holy man so assureth himself of his salvation, that he beats upon it as if he could never satisfy himself with any words, but fills his mouth with rejoicing hereat amidst all his afflictions. 'I am sure,' saith he, 'my Redeemer liveth.' 'I shall see God in my flesh,' 'I myself shall see him,' 'mine eyes shall behold him,' 'none other for me, but I myself shall behold him.' He doth as fully assure himself of his salvation as if he were already in full possession thereof. Of the like assurance of his salvation our apostle protesteth, saying, Rom. viii. 38, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels,' &c.; where the apostle doth not only speak of a probable persuasion, but of such a sure confidence, as whereby elsewhere he saith, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' &c. Neither groundeth he this persuasion upon any special revelation, but upon that ground which is common to him with all the faithful, even the love of God in Christ Jesus. Now as Job and Paul, not to instance in any others, assured themselves of their salvation, so we by the power of the same Spirit, and upon the same ground of the love of God in Christ Jesus, may and ought to assure ourselves of our salvation. True it is that if our salvation, and the certainty thereof, stood any way in ourselves, or depended upon our works, we might indeed justly doubt of our salvation, as knowing ourselves, by reason of our sins and iniquities, to have deserved death and damnation. But the ground and the foundation of the certainty of our hope is the sure promises of God in Christ Jesus, who hath promised in his word eternal life to all that believe. We look not upon ourselves, or our own works, or our own worthiness, for then must we needs doubt; but we look upon him that hath promised, even as Abraham did, whose faith we are to follow, of whom it is said that he neither did 'consider his own body, which was now dead, being almost an hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb; neither did he "doubt of the promise through unbelief" (where note how doubting is termed unbelief) but was "strengthened in the faith, and gave glory to God, being fully assured that he which had promised was also able to do it,' Rom. iv. 19-21. He then being faithful which hath promised salvation to them

that believe in his name, we are sure to be saved. But what need we to look farther for this point than into the very nature of faith; which the apostles have defined to be such a full assurance, that if ye take away assurance ye take away faith? For what else doth that mean that the apostle sometimes calleth faith, 'the ground of things which are hoped for, and the evidence of things that are not seen,' Heb. xi. 1; sometimes 'a stedfast faith,' Col. ii. 5; sometimes 'a full assurance,' Rom. iv. 21; sometimes 'an assurance without wavering,' James i. 6; and sometimes 'the anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,' Heb. vi. 19. 'Let us draw near,' saith the apostle, 'with a true heart, in assurance of faith, sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water. Let us keep the profession of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised,' Heb. x. 22, 23. Doth the apostle exhort us unto an assurance of faith, unto an hope without wavering, resting upon his promises that is faithful and true? Surely if we ought thus to believe, if we ought thus to hope, and that upon this ground, that he is faithful that hath promised, then may we and ought we to assure ourselves of our salvation. Whether, then, we look upon the examples of holy men in the Scriptures, or upon the sure promises of God in Christ Jesus made in the Scripture, or upon the nature of faith in the writings of the apostle, still we shall find that we ought not to doubt, but certainly to assure ourselves of our salvation through a sure and stedfast faith in Christ Jesus, who hath promised life and salvation to all them that believe in his name.

This, then, may serve for the confutation of that uncomfortable doctrine of the papists, where they teach, that without special revelation no man ought or can assure himself by faith of his salvation. The erroneousness of which doctrine, though it hath been fully manifested by that which already hath been said for confirmation of the plain opposite doctrine which we teach, yet for a further clearing of the truth in this point, I beseech you in a few words to consider how weak proofs they bring for what they teach.

Why then, I demand, may no man without special revelation assure himself by faith of his salvation? Because no man can say, 'My heart is clean, I am pure from sin,' Prov. xx. 9. Men may be clear from sin, saith Bellarmine,* but no man, saith he, can say so, because they that are clean cannot certainly know that they are clean, therefore no man without special revelation may assure himself by faith of his salvation. But see the weakness of his proof, which, 1, is grounded upon a corrupt reading, as the text in the original sheweth, whence the words are thus to be read, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean?' and are spoken to repress the insolency of such as think to be justified by their own strength; and, 2, leaneth upon a point of man's purity from sin in this

* Lib. iii. De Justif. c. iv.

point, which plainly contradicteth the Holy Ghost, both in that text and throughout the whole Scripture, which hath coneluded all under sin, Gal. iii. 22; and, 3, concludeth without premises, inasmuch as nothing thence can be concluded against assurance by faith of justification or salvation. For though no man can say that he hath made his heart clean, that he is pure from sin in himself, or by himself, yet, inasmuch as the Holy Ghost witnesseth, Aets xv. 9, 'that by faith God purifieth our hearts,' and, 1 John i. 7, that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' in him, and by him, through faith in his blood, we may assure ourselves of our justification and salvation.

Yea, but the preacher, Eccles. ix. 1, saying that 'a man' (speaking, saith Bellarmine, of the just and wise) 'knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come,' sheweth thereby that not the just or wise, and so not the faithful, can assure themselves of their justification or salvation; but see the weakness of this proof also, which, 1, as the former, is grounded upon a corrupt translation, as the original text sheweth, where the reading is much different from the vulgar, and so very obscure, both there and in the Greek, that it is an unfit place for the proof of such a point; and, 2, faileth in understanding that of the just and wise only, which is spoken of all, both just and wicked, as the next verse where the preacher expoundeth himself sheweth; and, 3, proveth only that no man, by outward things in this life, knoweth whether he be loved or hated of God. For so the words are to be read, that 'no man knoweth love or hatred,' *i.e.* whether he be loved or hated of God, by all that is before them, *i.e.* by the outward things which happen unto them, which appeareth to be most true, in that neither the just only prosper, nor the wicked only are afflicted, but the wicked many times flourish more than the just, and the hand of God many times lieth heavier upon the just than upon the wicked; but maketh nothing against assurance of salvation by faith, which leaneth not upon any outward things, but only upon the promise of God in his word. Yea, but St Paul, say they, durst not assure himself that he was justified, as appeareth by that he saith, 1 Cor. iv. 4, 'I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified,' and therefore no man may assure himself of his salvation. But they might see, 1, that the apostle there speaketh not of any uncertainty of his justification, whereof, elsewhere he assureth himself, Rom. viii. 33, but by express negative, plainly denieth that he was justified by the cleanliness of his conscience, that he knoweth nothing by himself; 2, that he speaketh there of his ministry and service therein, and acknowledgeth that though his conscience accuse him not of any crime therein, yet he is not thereby justified, which maketh against justification by anything in a man's self, though done in

as great perfection as mortal man can do it, but not at all against justification, or assurance of salvation by faith. Yea, but when he saith, Philip ii. 12, 'Work your salvation with fear and trembling,' he speaketh against the vain presumption of heretics, say the Rhemists on that place, that makes men secure of their predestination and salvation, and willeth the Philippians to work their salvation with fear and trembling, according to that other scripture, Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Blessed is the man that always is fearful.' Whereunto the answer is, 1, that both the apostle here, and Solomon in that other scripture, and the same apostle again when he saith, Rom. xi. 20, 'Be not high-minded, but fear;' and Peter, when he saith, 1 Peter i. 17, 'Pass the time of your dwelling here in fear;' and the Spirit of God generally, when he speaketh to like purpose, speaketh either against vain presumption in our strength, without due acknowledgment of our own frailty, and due depending upon the Lord, or against careless security of our salvation, without due regard of God's threats and judgments, and without inward grace and fear of God issuing into a godly life and conversation; but not against faithful boldness and confidence, not against assurance of our salvation by faith, grounded upon the promises of God in Christ Jesus.

2. That there is a twofold fear: a servile fear, and a filial fear; a fear opposite unto faith, and fear attending upon faith; a doubting and distrusting fear, and a careful and loving fear; a fear of discouraging diffidence, and a fear of awful reverence; a fear from the law to be punished, and a fear from grace to offend and deserve punishment; a fear begotten by the spirit of bondage, and a fear begotten by the Spirit of adoption; a fear whereof St John saith, 1 John iv. 18, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear;' a fear whereof St Paul saith, 2 Cor. vii. 11, that 'godly sorrow causeth fear'; and Solomon, Prov. xxviii. 14, that 'blessed is the man that feareth alway.' Now from that fear the Holy Ghost everywhere dehorteth, saying, Isa. xl. 10, 'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God;' and again, chap. xlivi. 1, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee,' &c.; and again, Mat. viii. 26, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' But unto this fear he everywhere exhorteth, saying, Ps. ii. 11, 'Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto him in trembling,' or, 'with reverence'; and again, Luke xii. 5, 'Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, him fear;' and again, 1 Peter ii. 17, 'Fear God, honour the King;' and again, Rev. xiv. 7, 'Fear God, and give glory to him;' and generally where he exhorteth unto fear, it is to this fear; so that when the apostle exhorteth 'to work our salvation with fear and trembling,' he exhorteth unto this fear, even to fear the judgments and threatenings of God, which the faithful always do, because faith believeth them; and to fear to trust in ourselves,

which every faithful man also doth, because faith itself importeth trust in God, and as the apostle's reason also sheweth we should, because 'it is God which worketh in us both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure ; and so to fear, as the prophet doth when he saith, ' Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice to him with reverence ;' the words are as in the apostle, *eum timore et tremore* ; but neither here, nor anywhere, doth the Holy Ghost exhort unto that servile, and doubting, and distrusting fear, as to stand in fear of our salvation.

Yea, but seeing the word of God doth nowhere speak namely and particularly to, or of any of us, therefore by faith, which is to be grounded upon the word of God, we cannot assure ourselves of our salvation. Whereunto first we answer, that though the word of God speak nowhere immediately by name, and personally to any of us, yet what it saith to believers generally, it saith to every believer ; and what to sinners generally, it saith to every sinner ; and every man is to conceive it as particularly spoken to himself, and to believe the same word preached by the minister of the gospel, as if Christ himself did personally speak unto him. So that, wheras the word saith, Luke xiii. 3, ' Except ye repent, ye shall perish,' he that believeth this word believeth also touching himself, that except he repent he shall perish ; so when the word saith, John iii. 15, that ' whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' as hence Paul said to the gaoler, Acts xvi. 31, ' Believe thou in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved ;' so every minister of the gospel may say to Thomas such a one, John such a one, and James such a one, &c., Believe thou in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved ; and every believer which believeth this word may, by faith gronnded on the word, particularly assure himself of his salvation, because he believeth ; inasmuch as otherwise the word were not true, ' whosoever believeth shall be saved.' Secondly, we ask them whence their priests, seeing the word doth nowhere speak namely and particularly to any of them, have authority to remit the sins of their penitentaries ? They will tell us, though untruly as they practise it, that they have all of them particularly authority from Christ his word, where he saith, John xx. 23, ' Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,' and their penitentiaries must believe it. Thus they will take leave to themselves, though they will not give us leave, from a general to infer a particular. But if their seduced ones must believe, that though their priests be not there named, yet thence they have all of them particularly authority to forgive sins, much more may every man that believeth, though he be not named, where Christ saith, ' Whosoever believeth shall be saved,' yet thence assure himself particularly by faith of his salvation.

Yet, but seeing it is no article of the creed to believe a man's own salvation, therefore no man is bound to

believe it. Whereunto we answer, that in professing the articles of our creed, we profess the assured belief of our own salvation. For each man in his particular to profess and say, ' I believe in God the Father, I believe in Jesus Christ his Son,' &c., is all one as to profess and say, I believe in God, that he is my God, and my Father, and my strong salvation ; I believe in Jesus Christ, that he was born unto me, and died for my sins, and rose again for my justification ; I believe in the Holy Ghost, that being sanctified by his work, I shall be glorified with my Saviour ; and I believe the holy catholic church, that I am a member of it, and that unto me belongeth the forgiveness of my sins, the resurrection of my body, and life everlasting, without which particular application to ourselves, the devil may believe the articles of the creed. And albeit we do not always so infallibly believe our own salvation as we do assent unto the articles of the creed ; but as our faith is in degree less or greater, so our apprehension of salvation is weaker or stronger ; yet in our weak apprehension of our salvation we truly believe it, and ought always strongly and stedfastly to believe it, and to pray with the apostles, Luke xvii. 5, that from weakness of faith, and slender assurance, we may grow unto strength of faith, and full assurance, as the apostles did. Yea, but the greatest certainty we can have of our salvation is only the certainty of hope, not any certainty of faith ; we may hope well of salvation, doing our duties, but we may not without great presumption assure ourselves by faith of it. Whereunto we answer, 1, that howsoever hope, as vulgarly men talk of hope, and as the papists speak of it, be always joined with fear, and doubt, and so uncertain, yet the certainty of that Christian hope, whereof the Scripture speaketh, and which [is] nothing else but a constant and patient expectation of that which we believe shall be, is as undoubted and sure as the certainty of faith, whereon it is grounded, and whereof it is the proper effect ; inasmuch as the Scripture saith of it, Rom. v. 5, that ' hope maketh not ashamed,' which, as Austin * noteth, it should do, if he that hopeth failed of his hope. And again, that ' hope makes us to rejoice,' ver. 2, which it should not if it made us not certain and sure of that we hope for. And again, Heb. vi. 19, he calleth hope ' an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast ;' and giveth unto it, chap. iii. 6, confidence, and rejoicing, and assurance. 2. That doing our duty can yield us neither faith nor hope, truly so called, because we come so short of doing our duty, that, as Jerome saith, if we consider our own merits, we must needs despair ; and so our hope is grounded, not upon doing our duty, but upon faith, and it upon the promise of God in his word, whence both faith and hope are certain of that they believe and hope for. 3. That it were great and wicked presumption to hope for salvation by virtue of our own doings, but no other presumption than godly to assure

* In Ps. xxxvi.

ourselves of our salvation by faith, inasmuch as this is the presumption of true faith, which presumeth not upon our own works, but upon the grace of Christ, and upon the promise of God made in his word. Let us now look a little nearer into the words; and the meaning of the words in this place of our apostle is evident.

With fear and trembling. We are therefore to remember what I have already told you, that there is a double fear mentioned in holy Scriptures: the one a servile and slavish fear, such as is in the children of disobedience, who fear not to offend and displease the most high God, but so fear the horror of that punishment which is due unto their sins, that they carry with them even an hell within their own bosom. Such a fear in the end breedeth despair, and is always so repugnant unto love, that in love there is no such fear, but ‘perfect love casteth out such fear,’ 1 John iv. 18. There is another fear, which is a godly and a soul-like fear, such as was in Job, of whom it is said, chap. i. 1, that he was ‘one that feared God, and eschewed evil;’ and such as was in Cornelius, of whom it is said, Acts. x. 2, that ‘he feared God with all his household, and that he gave much alms to the people, and that he prayed continually.’ This is such a fear as wherewith the good child standeth in awe of his father, and feareth to displease him. For as the good and dutiful child feareth his father, albeit he doubteth not of his father’s love towards him, nay, as he doth the more fear to displease his father, the more certainly that he is persuaded of his father’s love towards him, so the child of God in whom this godly fear doth dwell, the more certainly he is persuaded of the love of God towards him in Christ Jesus, the more he feareth him with this fear, the more he feareth to displease him, and therefore doth the more eschew that which is evil, and follow after that which is good and acceptable in his sight. And this is so far unlike unto that servile and slavish fear, that this fear is never severed from love, but the more we love, the more we fear to displease him whom we love, and the more we fear to displease him whom we love, the more we love him. Now, it is not to be doubted but that the apostle in this place speaketh of this godly fear, the other being such a fear as the Holy Ghost throughout the whole Scriptures would have utterly abandoned in all the children of God. Yea, but it is added, ‘with fear and trembling,’ which sheweth that the apostle doth not speak of such a fear as hath with it joined assurance of love, but of such a fear as is full of doubt, for trembling must needs argue doubtfulness. See, then, I beseech you, that place of the prophet, Ps. ii. 11, where they are both joined, as here in the apostle: ‘Serve the Lord with fear,’ saith the prophet, ‘and rejoice in trembling;’ where by *trembling* cannot be meant any doubt or distrust (for what rejoicing can be in such trembling as ariseth of doubt or distrust?), but by trembling is meant a reverence of his majesty, in whose love we are so to rejoice, as that

withal we fear to displease him. And, as there the prophet, so here our apostle would have us to serve the Lord with fear, to exclude all carnal security, whereby we grow careless and negligent to do that which is good; and with trembling to exclude arrogant presumption, whereby we grow pharisaically proud of that good which we do. The apostle, then, when he exhorteth us to make an end of our own salvation with fear and trembling, his meaning is this, that we should finish our course in doing such good works as God hath ordained us to walk in. But how? With fear and trembling, *i.e.* with all humbleness and reverence towards God, not doubting of his love towards us, but because we know he loveth us, fearing to displease him, either by carnal security of doing any good at all, or by vain presumption of our own worthiness for that good which we do.

The lesson, then, which hence we are taught is, what ought to be the continual conversation of a Christian, and how we ought to walk in the whole course of our life. We ought to ‘pass the time,’ even the whole time, ‘of our dwelling here,’ as the apostle speaks, ‘in fear,’ even in the reverent fear of his most holy name, in whose favour is life, and joy for evermore, 1 Pet. i. 17. Because we know he loveth us in his well-beloved Son, we ought to be most loath any way to displease him, and as dutiful children we ought to avoid and eschew everything that may offend his godly will. ‘If I be a master,’ saith the Lord by his prophet, Mal. i. 6, ‘where is my fear?’ whence it is plain that all that are his servants ought to fear to despise his name, as the priests there did, and to displease the Most High. Now, two motives there are which may persuade us unto this reverent and careful walking in the whole course of our life, and fear to displease him. The one is this: his eyes always behold us; whatsoever we do is naked before him; he knoweth the very thoughts of our hearts before we do conceive them, and there is nothing hid from him. This surely should make us watch, even over our thoughts; it should make us careful in all our ways, that we do not anything whereby we may grieve his Holy Spirit. And if we kept this always in remembrance, that whatsoever we do God sees us, it would stay oftentimes even the best of us from many things which we do. For therefore it is that we fall into many noisome lusts, that we defile ourselves with much filthiness of the world, that by many sins we displease our God, because we think not of his presence, and forget that he sees us. Which of us is there that in our prince’s presence would not fear to displease him? How much more ought we to fear to displease our God, in whose presence we are always, and who beholdeth whatsoever we do? Even the regard of his majesty, before whom we stand, should cause us to walk before him with fear and trembling.

The other motive to persuade us into a reverent and careful walking, as fearing to displease our God,

) is this : the quick and eagle-sighted eyes of the wicked are ever prying and looking into all our ways, that they may have some advantage against us, whereby they may take occasion to dishonour our God, and to speak ill both of us and of the gospel which we profess. This also should make us watchful over all our ways, that thereby we do not offend and displease our God. ‘Have your conversation honest,’ saith the apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 12, ‘among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, may by your good works which they shall see glorify God in the day of the visitation.’ The apostle saw that the Gentiles, among whom they lived, were ready to pick a quarrel at every little thing wherein they offended, thereby to dishonour God and to discredit the gospel. And therefore he exhorted them to look unto their conversation, that thereby God might be glorified amongst the Gentiles. And surely the Gentiles then were not more prying into the ways of Christians than the wicked and ungodly of the earth now are into the ways of God’s children. For if they tread awry, if they, through the malice of Satan, or the infirmity of the flesh, or the deceitfulness of sin, slip out of the right way wherein they should walk, by and by the wicked have it, and with open mouth they cry, These be our pure and holy men, these be our great professors of the gospel, these be the men that would be counted the only religious men! How careful, then, ought we to be of our conversation, even in regard of the watchful eye of the wicked, that we do or say nothing whereby they may take advantage against us, or occasion to dishonour God, or to speak ill of the gospel. Whether, therefore, we regard the majesty of our God, whose eyes always behold us, or the quick eyes of the wicked, which narrowly espy into our ways, we see that we ought to ‘pass the time of our dwelling here in fear,’ and to ‘make an end of our salvation with fear and trembling.’

Ought we, then, thus to walk before the Lord with fear and trembling? Here, then, are two extremities, which are, as two cankers of the soul, to be looked unto; the one carnal security, the other vain presumption. For such is Satan’s subtlety, that first he laboureth to make us careless of doing that is good; and then, if he cannot so deceive us, he taketh another course, and laboureth to make us proud of that good which we do. But we ought to walk before the Lord with fear and trembling; therefore, first, we ought not to be careless of doing that is good, but still we ought to fear lest our Lord and Master come in an hour when we shall be found doing no good. It was the fault of those dispersed Jews unto whom James wrote, that they boasted too much of their religion, and were too brag of their faith, but were altogether careless of doing those good works wherein God had ordained them to walk. And I wish it were not a fault in our days, that men did now but too much content themselves with the names only of faith and

religion, and were too careless of doing that which is good. But, beloved, let us know that if we believe in God, we must walk before him in holiness of life, with fear and trembling. We must not be careless to do good, but we must be careful to shew forth good works, as the apostle telleth us, Tit. iii. 8. This fear wherein we must walk must expel all carelessness in walking. And as this fear wherein we must walk must expel all carelessness in our walking, so must it likewise expel all vain presumption and pride in our walking. It was the Pharisee, you know, that stepped forth, and said, Luke xviii. 11, 12, ‘O God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithe of all that ever I possess.’ And others there are as pharisaical as this proud pharisee was, who presume so much of the worth of their works, that they dare by the merits of them challenge heaven unto themselves. But if the person of the poor publican better beseemeth us, of whom it is said, ver. 13, that ‘he did not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, O God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ we must not be puffed up with the vain opinion of the worth of our works, how good soever they seem to be, but we must run on the race that is set before us with fear and trembling. As holiness, so humbleness and reverence becometh the house of God, which we are, if we believe aright in the Son of God, and so live as he hath commanded. ‘A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but a fool rageth, and is careless,’ saith Solomon, Prov. xiv. 16; whereby he teacheth us that a reverent fear of God’s majesty is a notable means to make a good man to avoid sin. Pass the time, therefore, I beseech you, of your dwelling here, in fear, and walk in those good works which God hath ordained you to walk in, with fear and trembling; with fear, I say, and trembling, both in regard of the majesty of God, whose eyes always behold us, lest you displease him; and in regard of the wicked, whose eyes are prying into whatsoever we do, that they may have no advantage against you. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, either by carnal security and carelessness to do that good which ye should, or by vain and proud presumption of the worth of that good which ye do, but walk before the Lord as becometh the saints of God, with fear and trembling; fearing not to do good, and trembling at the good which ye do, lest either not doing that good which ye ought, or presuming of that good which ye do, ye displease him who loveth you, and in whose love is life and joy for evermore. And let this be spoken touching the manner how we ought to walk and to finish our course. Now followeth the reason why we ought thus to walk.

For it is God which worketh, &c. This is the reason why we ought not simply to make an end of our own salvation, but to make an end of our own salvation with fear and trembling. ‘With fear and

trembling ; why ? ‘For it is God which worketh,’ &c. Neither the will nor the deed in anything well done is from ourselves, that we should be puffed up with any pride thereof, but from the Lord ; and therefore, when he guides us, we should not be seure to follow. ‘It is God,’ saith the apostle, ‘that worketh in you both the will—the will ; how ? Not by helping the weakness of our will, as if, being a little holpen by grae, it were in us to will that is good ; but by sanctifying our corrupt will, that whereas before it was wholly and only inclined unto evil, now it loveth, and liketh, and followeth after that which is good—‘and the deed.’ How ? By giving grace to do that good, to the desire whereof he hath sanctified our will. It is, then, as if the apostle should thus have said : Walk in well-doing before the Lord, but with fear and trembling. Why ? For it is not in you either to will or to do that is good, but it is God that first sanctifieth your wills to desire the things that belong unto your peace, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to acknowledge and lament your sins, and the like, and afterwards giveth grae to believe and to live according to God in Christ Jesus. Whence are many lessons for us.

Here, then, first, that doctrine of free will is utterly overthrown. If we will or do anything that is good, ‘it is God that worketh in us both the will and the deed.’ Whosoever, therefore, shall tell you that we have power in ourselves to will and to do that which is good, and that we need only to be holpen, but not wholly assisted by grace, believe him not. For I ask, what is it that is left unto us, when both the will to do good, and the deed itself, are given us of God ? If it be God that worketh in us both the will and desire to do good, and likewise the grae of doing that which is good, then what is it that we can challenge unto ourselves ? If it had been said that God is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end of every good thing that we do, then haply some starting-hole might have been found ; but when it is said that it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do that which is good, out of doubt all power is taken from us of doing anything that is good. True it is that Adam, before his fall, had free will to choose the good, and to refuse the evil ; but by his fall he lost that whieh in his creation he had, even all free will unto all the things of the Spirit, so that till such time as he be regenerated by the Spirit of God, he cannot at all by his own power understand, think, will, or do anything that is good, but is wholly and only carried to that which is evil, and can do nothing else but sin, lying bound in the chains of sin, not as a man fettered, whieh hath a desire to be loose, but of himself naturally willing and desirous so to lie. ‘The natural man,’ saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ;’ where the apostle, under-

standing by the natural man the unregenerate man, whose knowledge and understanding the Lord hath not yet cleared and lightened by his Holy Spirit, plainly sheweth that the unregenerate man hath none understanding at all in the ways of God, and the things that belong unto his peacee, neither can have till the Lord sanctify him by his Holy Spirit, changing his corrupt will, and working in him both the will and the deed. Many scriptures might be brought for the enlarging and further proof of this point ; but by that whieh hath been spoken, ye see what the truth is in the point, namely, that it is not in our own power at all to will or do that which is good, but that it is God whieh worketh in us both the will and the deed, so that the thing whieh we do is no further good than it is wholly guided and direeted by the Spirit of God. Take heed, therefore, and beware of such as tell you otherwise than as ye have now heard and learned, that ye be not deceived by them.

Secondly, Henee we are taught whence all our sufficiency and all our strength to walk in the ways of God is, even from God, who is the alone author of all goodness, and the giver of all blessings. ‘What hast thou,’ saith the apostle, ‘that thou hast not received?’ To prepare our hearts unto that which is good, this is from the Lord, for ‘he prepareth the heart,’ Ps. x. 17. To think a good thought, this is from the Lord, for ‘we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God,’ 2 Cor. iii. 5. To will and desire that whieh is good, and to do that which is good, is likewise from the Lord, ‘for it is God that worketh in us both the will and the deed.’ So true is that of our Saviour, John xv. 5, ‘Without me ye can do nothing ;’ where the meaning is, not only that we are so weak that we are not able of ourselves to do anything that is good, unless we be assisted by grace, but that we are no more able than the branch that is plucked from the tree is able to bring forth fruit. The sum of this point is, that the fruits of the Spirit in us are altogether from the Spirit, even as the fruits of the flesh are altogether from the flesh. Doest thou then at any time feel any good motions of the Spirit within thee, any desire to flee that whieh is evil, and to do the thing that is good ? Is thine heart enlarged to run the way of God’s commandments, and to glorify thy Father whieh is in heaven ? Are the bowels of thy compassion opened towards thy poor brethreue, to relieve the necessities of God’s saints ? It is God that worketh in thee all these, and whatsoever is like unto these ; and they are so many testimonies unto thee of God’s Holy Spirit dwelling within thee. Acknowledge, therefore, God’s mercy towards thee, who, ‘when thou wast in thy blood, said unto thee, Thou shalt live,’ Ezek. xvi. 6 ; that is, who, when thou wast dead in sins and trespasses, and hadst no will to be raised from the dead sleep of sin whereinto thou wast fallen, hath quickened thee by his Spirit, and of unwilling made thee willing

to do those things that are good and acceptable in God's sight. Glory not in any good thing that thou hast, as though thou hadst not received it; for when thou wast as unable to will or to do anything that is good, as the dead man is unable to exercise any function of life, then did he circumcise the foreskin of thine heart, and did not only work in thee a power to will and to do the thing that is good, but gave thee also grace both to will and to do the thing that is good. Glory, therefore, in thy God, let thy soul rejoice in him, and let his praises be ever in thy mouth. He it is that filleth thy heart with good desires, and he it is that directeth thy steps in the way wherein thou shouldest walk, and which leadeth unto life. And why doth he show such mercy on us? 'Even of his good pleasure.'

Eren of his good pleasure. We have heard that it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do that which is good. And why doth he so? That God may be all in all, and all the glory of our salvation may be wholly his. The apostle telleth us that this he doth even of good pleasure; it so pleaseth him, and howsoever the cause of this his pleasure be hidden from us, yet it is good and just; he doeth it even of his good pleasure. Here, then, we have the first and furthest cause even of the whole mystery of our salvation. He hath predestinated and chosen us unto eternal life through Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world. And why? The apostle telleth us he did it 'according to the good pleasure of his will,' Eph. i. 4. 'He hath opened unto us the mystery of his will,' Eph. i. 9. And why? This, also, he did 'according to his good pleasure.' 'He hath made us accepted in his beloved, by whom we have redemption through his blood,' ver. 6. And why? This, also, is 'according to his rich grace,' ver. 7. He hath wrought in us both to will and to do the things that belong unto our peace. And why? 'Even of his good pleasure.' Wilt thou, then, know why God hath chosen thee, and refused him; why he hath made thee a vessel of honour, and him a vessel of dishonour; why he hath taken away the hardness

of thy heart, and suffereth him still to walk in the hardness of his own heart; why he hath sanctified thy will, and left him in the frowardness of his own will? He hath not done these things for any good thing which he saw in thee, or for any goodness which he foresaw would be in thee, not for thy birth, wealth, sex, or condition, but even of his good pleasure; for look into the whole book of God, still thou shalt find that the last and great cause of all our good is his grace, his mercy, his love, his purpose, his will, the purpose of his will, his good pleasure, the good pleasure of his will. And when thou comest hither, here thou must stay thyself, and cry with the apostle, Rom. xi. 31, 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,' &c. If it be the potter's pleasure to make of the same lump of clay one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, who shall question further with him when this answer is once given;—It was his pleasure, even the good pleasure of his will?

Is there, then, nothing in us to move him; but is it even of his good pleasure that he saveth us, and that he doth so great things for us? Oh what great thankfulness, what dutifulness, what obedience ought this to stir us up unto! The greater that the gift is, and the freer that it is, the more it ought to stir us up unto these duties. Now, what greater gift than our salvation, and all the means thereunto? And how could this gift be more free than to have it given us even of his good pleasure, without respect of anything that was or might be in us? Let us, then, with all thankfulness yield all obedience unto this so merciful a God, who hath done so great things for us, even because his good pleasure was such. He hath given us all: let him have the glory of all. Neither can we attribute too much unto him, neither can we detract too much from ourselves. Whatsoever good thought, whatsoever good desire, whatsoever good deed is in us, he of his good pleasure hath wrought it in us, and he is to be glorified in it, and for it. Other fountain of our good there is none, and therefore all the praise, and honour, and glory thereof is due unto him alone.

LECTURE XXXV.

Do all things without murmuring and reasonings; that ye may be blameless, and pure, and the sons of God, without rebuke, &c.—PHILIP. II. 14, 15.

HI THERTO, then, we have spoken of that humble obedience, which we, following the example of Christ his humility and obedience, ought to yield unto our God in all holiness of conversation. Now followeth another branch of the apostle his exhortation, upon the same ground of Christ his humility and obedience, and this is unto an humble and modest conversation towards our neighbour, towards our brethren, in these words, 'Do all things without murmuring,' &c. For

as the example of Christ his humility and obedience should stir us up unto all humble obedience unto our God, to walk before him with fear and with trembling, so ought it likewise to persuade us unto all humble and modest conversation toward our brethren, laying aside all secret murmuring, and all contentious reasonings, and with meekness every one yielding one unto another, and every one forbearing one another.

Do all things without murmuring, &c. These words,

you see, are a dehortation and dissuasion from things to be eschewed, and by consequent they are an exhortation unto things to be embraced. Two things there are, you see, which the apostle dissuadeth, the one murmuring, the other reasonings. By murmuring, the apostle (I take it) in this place doth not so much mean murmuring against God, as secret grudgings in ourselves against our brethren, and privy whisperings, such as closely run from hand to hand, to defame or to disgrace those whom we like not. By reasonings are meant such open discords and contentions as those secret grudgings and privy whisperings do for the most part break out into. Both these faults the apostle would have avoided and eschewed amongst men one towards another, that neither there should be secret grudgings and privy whisperings one against another, neither there should be open quarrelling or contending one with another. Now, it is further to be understood that, in this dehortation from these faults, the apostle implieth an exhortation to those good virtues whereby these bad faults may be redressed, namely, unto a modest conversation with our brethren, and a peaceable agreement with all men. When the apostle therefore saith, ‘Do all things without murmuring,’ it is as if he had thus said: Let there be no secret grudgings amongst you one against another, nor any privy whisperings running closely from hand to hand, to defame or to disgrace one another; but let every one amongst you approve himself unto another, in all modesty of conversation, modestly yielding unto his superior, and equal, and willingly making himself equal unto them of the lowest degree. Again, when he saith, ‘Do all things without reasonings,’ it is as if he had thus said: Let there be no open discords or contentions amongst you, either through bearing out yourselves one above another, or upon any occasion what else soever; but follow peace and love with all men, and do all things with patience and mildness. This I take to be the meaning of these words. Now, before we proceed unto the opening of the rest that follow, let us see what use we may make of this exhortation.

Do all things without murmuring. The first thing which the apostle here dissuadeth is murmuring. Now, we read of two sorts of murmurers in the holy Scriptures: the one of such as murmur against the most high God, Lord of heaven and earth. So we read that the Israelites often murmured, Num. xi. 5, xxi. 5, sometimes for want of water, sometimes for want of bread, sometimes for want of the cucumbers, and the pepons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic, and the flesh-pots of Egypt; and for want of such things as caused their often murmurings, it is said that they returned in their hearts into Egypt. And such murmurers against God at this day are they who, in this our time of want of bread, either break out into such impatient speeches as these: What means the Lord to kill us with famine? What greater

sinners are we than such and such, that have the world at will, and all things at their desire? Would God he would either mend these things, or make an end of us; who can endure such a hard time? Better to die any way than to die of famine, &c. They, I say, that either break out into such impatient speeches, or through malcontentedness seek to raise up seditions, and uproars, and rebellions in the commonwealth, so to procure a remedy by a worse mischief, are found to be murmurers against God, grudging at that which he doth, and seeking a way without him to redress it. But what was the end of those murmurers amongst the children of Israel? Some of them were consumed by fire from heaven, others were smitten with an exceeding great plague, others died, being bitten and stung with fiery serpents; and of all of them this was true, that none of them came into the promised land. A fearful end upon murmurers against God: some die one way, and others are slain another way; every one hath a fearful end, and never a one comes into the promised land, never a one enters into that heavenly rest, where only is rest and joy for evermore. As, therefore, the apostle exhorted the Corinthians, saying, 1 Cor. x. 10, ‘Murmur not as some of the children of Israel murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer;’ so I say unto you, Take heed that none of you be found murmurers against God either for this his judgment, whereby he now doth most justly visit our sins and our iniquities upon us, or for anything else, lest his wrath be kindled against you, and there be none to deliver you. For all these things whereof we have spoke, came unto the children of Israel for ensamples, and were written to admonish us, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Another sort of murmurers there are, which murmur against their brethren, grudging either at their wealth, or at the love and favour, or at the credit and preferment wherein they go before them, and closely seeking their discredit, whispering amongst their neighbours whatsoever evil they can devise against them. So the evangelists everywhere testify that the scribes and pharisees murmured against Jesus, and against his disciples, because they saw that the people fell everywhere unto them, and followed them. So we read, Acts vi. 1, that the Grecians murmured against the disciples of Christ, pretending that their widows were neglected in the daily ministering. And this principally is that murmuring which our apostle in this place would have abandoned, that we should not malign one another, that we should not have any grudgings or heart-burnings within ourselves one against another, that we should not secretly and closely seek the discredit or disgrace one of another. A fault whether more bad, or more common, it is hard to say, and that even amongst neighbours, amongst brethren. For what more ordinary than one neighbour, for some cause or other, to murmur against another? If he be our superior in wealth, or in honour, or in credit, we

murmur against him as too great to dwell so near us ; and be he never so kind unto us, yet still we do imagine that he bears himself too much upon his wealth, or upon his birth, or upon his place, &c., and overlooks us. If he be our equal, we grudge that he should come forward as well as ourselves, that he should be as much honoured, that he should be as much loved, that he should be as well customed as ourselves. If he be our inferior, we disdain him, and that livelihood which he hath we wish unto ourselves, and would be content that he should shift as he could. Thus, amongst all sorts there is murmuring, and grudging, and repining ; so that whereas all things should be done without murmuring, nothing is done without murmuring. Yea, and which is the vile malice of this disease, if haply sometimes there be some just cause, we speak not of it, we do not friendly and neighbourly expostulate things one with another, but we make fair weather outwardly, when as yet both we foster within ourselves ill conceits and opinions one of another, and likewise whisper, one with another, such things as tend to the disgrace one of another. Now, see the root whence this murmuring springs ; surely it springs even from an evil and a cankered mind within ourselves, which makes us that we cannot brook any of any sort, but whatsoever their place be, superior, equal, or inferior to us, we mutter and we are impatient towards them, and whatsoever almost is done or said we take occasion to be offended therat. And such as is the root whence it springs, such is the fruit which it brings forth, both bad, and exceeding bad. For howsoever we do smother and suppress it for a time, and carry it so closely that he whom we grudge at suspects nothing by us, yet will it most commonly in the end burst out, like a flame, into brawls, and heats, and open contentions, and discords, and the more closely the fire hath been covered, the more vehemently it will break out. It behoveth us, therefore, carefully to look unto it that we be not tainted with this fault, and, if there be any such root of bitterness in any of us, to weed it out. Let every man look into his own heart, and examine himself how this may concern him ; and this, with the apostle, I exhort, that ye do all things without murmuring. Be not ready to take offence at every small fault one with another ; foster not within yourselves any ill opinions or conceits one of another ; whisper not anything amongst yourselves which may tend to the discredit or disgrace one of another ; grudge not to perform any duty every man in his place one unto another. But, contrariwise, let every man approve himself in all modesty of conversation one unto another ; let every man think well one of another ; let every man yield one unto another ; let every man bear one with another ; and let all things be done with cheerfulness and modesty. For this ye must know, that he that dissuadeth murmuring amongst neighbours and brethren, doth withal desire that all cheerfulness and loving-kind-

ness be maintained amongst them. Have your conversation then, one with another, with all cheerfulness and brotherly kindness, and do all things that any way concern your duties one unto another without murmuring, and likewise without reasoning ; for so it followeth in the next place.

And reasonings. This is the second thing which the apostle dissuadeth, that we should fall to reasonings about anything that we do. 1. That we should fall unto open brawling, or quarrelling, or contentions one with another. We read that when there was fallen a debate between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle, Gen. xiii. 7, 8, Abraham said unto Lot, 'Let there be no strife, no brawling or falling out between me and thee, neither between mine herdmen and thine herdmen ; for we be brethren.' See how careful Abraham was to stay all contention and brawls. He was Lot's elder, and uncle, and so his better in that respect ; but he standeth not upon that, neither doth he hearten his servants and set them on, as the manner of some is, but he goes unto Lot, and talks with him of the matter, and that not hotly, but kindly and friendly, with great meekness of love, and requests him that there be no brawling or contention between their servants, or betwixt themselves ; and to that purpose he both useth reasons to persuade thereunto, and yieldeth of his right rather than there should be any such betwixt them. Whereby you see this holy patriarch's judgment of them ; rather than he would have any brawls and contentions with his brother, he would resign that right unto him which he might rightly have challenged unto himself. Now what account the apostle makes of brawling and contention, and discords of men one with another, ye may clearly see by those notable fruits of the flesh wherewith he sorteth this fault whereof we now speak, Gal. v. 20, as namely, with 'adultery, fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, heresy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like.' Ye see, then, what vice it is from whence the apostle here dissuadeth us, when he dissuadeth us from reasonings, and brawls, and contentions one with another ; even from that which Abraham by his example hath taught us to redeem with the loss of our own right, and from that which the apostle sorteth amongst the most ugly monsters which reign amongst men. And these brawlings, and contentions, and discords are the fruits which follow those murmurings, and privy grudgings whereof we speake before. For as wood and fuel is unto the fire, so are those close murmurings unto these open brawls and contentions, even the very ground and matter whereout they do spring ; and, as the fire long covered and smothered is not always kept under, but at length bursteth out into a flame, so those concealed hatreds, howsoever for a time they lie boiling within the breast of him that fostereth them, yet do they at length shew themselves in their colours, even breaking out into open strifes and contentions. It

standeth us upon to strangle both the mother and the daughter, to avoid both the one and the other, lest yielding possession in our hearts unto the one, we ourselves be overtaken and strangled with the other. And to this end, as the apostle before exhorteth us to do all things without murmuring, so now to do all things without reasonings and contentions one with another. The apostle thus writeth to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xii. 20, 'I fear lest, when I come among you, I shall not find you such as I would, and lest there be among you strife, envying, wrath, contentions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, and discord.' I do not, neither can I, charge you with any of these things; only with the apostle I exhort you that there be no debate, or quarrelling, or jarring, or contention, or strife amongst you. Let not every foolish and flying word, every toying and trifling matter, breed brawls, or kindle the coals of dissension amongst you. It is the counsel of wise Solomon, Prov. xxv. 8, 'Go not forth hastily to strife, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame; but debate thy matter with thy neighbour:' in which words he teacheth us quickly to cut off all occasions of strife and contention, and to use charitable conference one with another, for the taking up of all such things as may breed strife and contention. Again, in another place, Prov. xvii. 14, saith the same Solomon, 'The beginning of strife is as one that openeth the waters; therefore, ere the contention be meddled with, leave off;' where he liketh him that moveth and beginneth strife unto a man that, by plucking up a sluice, lets in the waters which before were shut up, and so drowns whatsoever is in the way. But the thing which therein he teacheth us is this, that we should withstand the beginnings, as of all evils in general, so in particular, of strife and contention. Beware therefore, I beseech you, that ye suffer not this canker to spread amongst you. Brawling and debate, strife and contention, becomes not them that have given their names to Christ Jesus. Peace and love, kindness and gentleness one towards another, best becometh you. Follow, therefore, after love, seek peace, and ensue it. Be kind and courteous one unto another, be gentle and loving one unto another, and have peace amongst yourselves, and so the God of peace shall be with you and bless you.

That ye may be blameless, and pure, &c. Now followeth the reason, as I take it, of both the branches of the apostle his exhortation; namely, why we should both walk in holiness of life before the Lord with fear and trembling, and why our conversation with our neighbours and brethren should be without murmuring and reasonings. The reason is twofold: the one in respect of the Philippians, 'that they might be blameless and pure,' &c.; the other in respect of the apostle himself, 'that he might rejoice in the day of Christ,' &c. The sum of the first reason, in respect of the Philippians, and consequently in respect of us, is this: that we

ought to lead a life as the sons of God in the midst of a foward people, therefore we ought to pass the time of our dwelling here with fear and trembling, and to do all things without murmuring and reasoning. The reason seemeth to be drawn from the end why we should so walk, why we should so do. Why should we so walk; why should we so do? To what end? 'That we may be blameless,' &c.; that is, in brief, that we may be as the sons of God in the midst of a foward people. But the particulars whereby this is enlarged have their several uses, and are very well worthy our serious consideration.

That ye may be blameless. We must walk thus, and do thus, that we may be blameless; that is, that we may not give unto any, any just cause of complaining of us, or blaming us. And this is set down for us as a mark to shoot at, whereat in our life we must level as near as possible we can, even to live without blame and reproof amongst men. Yea, but is this possible? Could our Saviour Christ himself, or could his apostles and disciples, escape the reproof and hatred of the Jews? No, they could not; neither can we. For our Saviour himself hath told us, that the world, i.e. the wicked men of the world, shall hate us, and speak all manner of evil against us for his sake falsely. Yet therefore were they blameless, because the Jews hated them without a cause, as our Saviour saith of himself, John xv. 25, because there was no just cause of their reproof. And so it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth his wife, Luke i. 6, that 'they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord without reproofs.' Without reproof; how? In respect of God? No; but in respect of men they were without reproof, inasmuch as they gave no just cause of exception against them unto any man. And this is it whereunto we must bend ourselves, and our studies, even so to live as that we give no just occasion of offence or complaint of us unto any man either by word or by deed. Yea, but this also is impossible, so to live as not to give many times just occasions of offences, just occasions of reproofs. True it is; for who is he that lives so well, that gives not just occasions of reproofs? But what then? Must we not therefore study so to live as not to give any just occasion of reproof? Our Saviour Christ telleth us that we must be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect: a thing altogether impossible for us to be perfect in this life; yet must we even in this life strive thereunto, that though we cannot come as far as we should, yet we may endeavour to come as far as we can, even as our apostle witnesseth of himself, where he saith, Philip. iii. 12, 13, 'I forget that which is behind, and endeavour to that which is before, and follow hard toward the mark,' &c.; where he plainly sheweth, that though he could not come unto perfection, yet he laboured thereunto. Right so, although we cannot be blameless, nor haply without just occasion of blame and reproof, yet must we study and endeavour so to live

amongst men, as that, neither by word nor by deed, we give them just occasion to complain of us or to blaine us. But how far a great many in these last and worst days are from this study and endeavour, he seeth little that seeth not. When the apostle saith, ‘do all things without murmuring and reasonings, that ye may be blameless,’ he sheweth plainly that those that are tainted with those faults of murmuring, and brawling, and contention, are not blameless, but are justly to be reproved, giving just occasion thereof by their wranglings, and malecontented contentions.

To go one step farther; the profane swearer, is he such a student as now we speak of; doth he study to be without just reproof? Nay, reprove him for his cursed swearing, a thing most worthy reproof, yet reprove him, and great odds but he will heap oath upon oath to let you know how little he esteems just reproof. I speak that I know, having sometimes myself, to my great grief, heard it. And if we should go farther, how few such students should we find as study to be blameless? Ye yourselves do see it, and find it in the ordinary course of life and common experience. Well, let us know that not only scholars ought to be such students as we now speak of, but all generally, of what sort or state soever they be, ought to stndy so to lead their lives, as that they may want just reproof amongst their brethren. And if we ought, then let us bo such students, and let every of us set such a watch before our lips, that we may not offend with our tongue, and so order our steps that we give no just occasion of exception against us, that so we may come as near unto this of our apostle as we can, to be blameless.

The next clause is, *that we may be pure*. We must walk before God with fear and trembling, and we must do all things with our neighbour without murmuring and grudging, that we may be pure; that is, that in our spirits there may be found no guile, but that in singleness of heart we may speak and do whatsoever we speak or do. And this is set down as another mark for us to shoot at, wherat likewise we must level so near as we can in the whole courso of our life, even to be pure and clean from all fraud and guile, both in our words and deeds. And if we hit this mark, we shall not miss of the other; if we be pure, we shall be blameless; if whatsoever we speak or do proceed from the singleness of a sincere heart, we shall avoid all just reproof for whatsoever we say or do. That, therefore, we may be blameless, we ought to stndy to be pure from all contagion of sin. Yea, but the stars are unclean in his sight, how much more man, a worm, even

the son of man, which is but a worm; and he hath laid folly upon his angels, how much more upon us that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which shall be destroyed before the moth! True it is, none can say, I have made mine heart clean, I am clean from my sin; but if God should dispute with us, we could not answer him one thing of a thousand. Yet ought we to endeavour to be pure even from all contagion of sin, and to keep ourselves unspotted of the world. And if so, then ought we to be simple, and sincere, and plain dealing in all our words and works, which the apostle especiailly here intendeth: ‘Be ye wise,’ saith our Saviour, Mat. x. 16, ‘as serpents, and innocent as doves;’ where the same word is used that here is used. And albeit that be spoken in particular there unto the apostles, yet the use is general, that all should be innocent as doves, all should lead a life pure from all fraud and guile. So of that which, in particular, the apostle speaketh unto servants: Eph. vi. 5, ‘Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your hearts as unto Christ.’ Of this, I say, we ought to make this general use, that we ought to speak and do all things in singleness of our hearts as unto Christ; for as James saith, chap. i. 8, ‘the double-minded man is inconstant in all his ways.’ He that hath a heart and a heart, he that can dissemble with his lips and flatter with his tongne, there is no trust to be given unto him. Our speech ought to be simple, yea and nay; and we ourselves ought to be simple and pure in heart, that both in word and in work we may be found sincere and entire, a point not unworthy your meditation, but most needful to be practised. For this ye must know, that the more fraud and guile ye use, be it in word, or be it in work, the farther ye are from God, and the nearer ye are unto the prinice of this world. Be not afraid of being too pure, and too, too preeise. When ye have studied this point as much as ye can, yet ye shall still be impure enough, and too far short of that purity which should be in you. Study to be, as in word, so in deed, and pure in both. Let there be no deceitfulness in any of you, either in the works of your hands, or in the words of your lips. Ye are purified, and purged, and washed by the blood of that immaculate Lamb Christ Jesus, which he shed for the remission of your sins. Defile not yourselves again with the filthiness of the world. Be ye pure, that ye may be blameless; be ye blameless and pure, that ye may be as ‘the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation,’ which are the words next following to be handled.

LECTURE XXXVI.

And the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, among whom ye shine as lights, &c.—PHILIP. II. 15.

AND the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst, &c. This is the third clause in the apostle his reason why we should hearken unto both the former exhortations, why we should walk before the Lord in holiness of life, with fear and trembling, and why we should do all things with our neighbour without murmuring and reasonings, ‘that we may be the sons of God,’ &c.; that is, that being the sons of God by adoption and grace, we may be known to be so, by our care to walk without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, keeping ourselves undefiled by their wicked conversation. By a naughty and crooked nation, the apostle understandeth all such wicked and ungodly men, as, walking in the darkness of their own understanding, are enemies unto the truth of Christ, and hate the light because their works are evil. And such, it seemeth, were the greatest part of them of Macedonia, in the midst of whom that small number of the faithful which were at Philippi, and which, by Paul’s preaching, had embraced the gospel of Christ Jesus, lived. The apostle, therefore, applying the example of Christ his humility and obedience unto them, exhorteth them so to walk both before God and with their brethren, that they may be blameless and pure, and the sons of God; that is, both known to be the sons of God, by leading an holy and uncorrupt life amongst the enemies of Christ and his truth, and continue so to be, notwithstanding the corrupt conversation of the wicked among whom they live.

Here, then, is a third mark set down for us to shoot at, a third thing whereunto we must bend ourselves and our whole studies, even that it may be known that we are the sons of God. Known unto whom? Both unto ourselves and unto others. Our labour and endeavour must be, that we may know ourselves to be the sons of God, and that others may also know that we are the sons of God. ‘Give all diligence,’ saith Peter, 2 Peter i. 10, ‘to make your calling and election sure;’ in which words of the apostle ye see how carefully the apostle would have us to be employed in this study: he would have us to give all diligence hereunto, that we may be sure that we are the sons of God, elect and chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Our election, it is according to the good purpose of his will, who hath predestinated us unto eternal salvation. Our adoption likewise into the sons of God through Jesus Christ, it is according to the riches of his grace and favour towards us. And these things, even our election and adoption into the sons of God, are most sure in themselves, neither can they, by us, any way be procured either to be if they be not, or being, to be more sure than they be. For

whom he hath chosen and adopted into sons, them he hath chosen and adopted before the foundation of the world, and his decree is, beyond all degrees of comparison, more unalterable and unchangeable than are the laws of the Medes and Persians. Yet such are the mercies of our God towards us, that howsoever we can help nothing unto our election, or unto our adoption into the sons of God, yet may we know whether we be elected, whether we be the sons of God, and besides, we may give proof thereof unto others. And hereunto it is that we ought to give all diligence, and to bend ourselves and our whole studies, that it may appear, both unto ourselves and unto others, that we are the sons of God. A study whereunto the comfort which thence may arise may be a sufficient inducement unto any. For wherein should we rather labour, than in that wherein we may take the greatest comfort? Or wherein can we take so great comfort as in this, that we know that we are, and that it doth appear unto others that we are, the sons of God? Herein alone is found joy and comfort, and without this what can there be else but restlessness of thoughts, and disquietness of mind?

Yea, but you will ask me how this may appear, either unto ourselves or others, that we are the sons of God? I answer out of the apostle, even by walking without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, by the fruits of the Spirit shewing themselves in the holiness of our conversation. ‘For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,’ Rom. viii. 14. Now who are they that are led by the Spirit of God? Even they that by the power of the Spirit of sanctification mortify the deeds of the body, as there the apostle sheweth, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. So, then, they which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, flying from sin as from a serpent, and being zealous of good works, they have an infallible testimony that they are the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life. Herby then we ourselves know that we are the sons of God, even by the fruits of the Spirit, which he hath given us. And therefore Peter, in the place before alleged, ‘Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,’ immediately addeth, ‘For if ye do these things,’ that is, if ye bring forth those fruits of the Spirit mentioned before, ‘ye shall never fall;’ where the apostle plainly sheweth, that the way to confirm our election unto ourselves is by the fruits of the Spirit, which he hath given unto us. Herby, likewise, we make it apparent unto others that we are the sons of God, if we walk in those good works which God hath ordained us to walk in. And therefore our Saviour

Christ exhorteth us, saying, Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;’ even him whose sons they shall know you to be, by those good works which they shall see you do. So that, as the end wherefore we were predestinate to be adopted into the sons of God through Jesus Christ, was that we should be holy, and without blame before God in love, so the means whereby we are declared, both to ourselves and others, to be the sons of God, is our holy conversation, and walking without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation. When therefore I say that we ought to give all diligence, that we may appear to be the sons of God, the meaning is, that we ought to be holy in conversation, and without blame in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, that so it may appear that we are the sons of God.

Yea, but here again it will be said, where is he that is holy in all manner of conversation? And who is he that walketh, without rebuke, amongst the sons of men? And, therefore, how can it appear by the note of our sanctification that we are the sons of God? I answer, that howsoever our sanctification here in this life be so unperfect, that we cannot be holy in all manner of conversation, or walk without rebuke amongst the sons of men, yet if we strive and labour, if we study and endeavour to be holy without blame, and to walk as the sons of God amongst the sons of men, hereby it doth and may appear that we are the sons of God. If we hate the sins of unfaithfulness, and let no such cleave unto us; if we suffer not sin to reign in our mortal bodies, but strive to subdue the flesh unto the spirit; if we fly the corruptions which are in the world through lusts, and study to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world; if we long and thirst after those things that belong unto our peace, and can, in the needful time of trouble, come unto our God, and cry, ABBA, FATHER: hereby it doth and may appear that we are the sons of God. The godly strife against sin, and careful desire of walking in the ways of God, without rebuke, they are the sure and undoubted stamps of the Spirit, of our adoption into the sons of God, and the certain fruits of that Spirit whereby we are sealed until the redemption of the possession purchased unto the praise of his glory. If thou desire further proof of these things, look into the holy Scriptures, and they shall instruct thee sufficiently herein. ‘Blessed,’ saith our Saviour Christ, Mat. v. 6, ‘are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness;’ where our Saviour sheweth, that not they alone which are righteous, but they also which hunger and thirst after righteousness, are blessed, and consequently the sons of God. So we read that Abraham’s willingness to offer up his only begotten son Isaac, for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, was accepted with God for as sure a proof of his faith and obedience as if he had offered him up indeed, Gen. xii. 12; insomuch that, in

regard of his willingness thereunto, the apostles plainly say that he did offer up Isaac when he was tried, Heb. xii. 17, James ii. 21; so little difference the Holy Ghost putteth between the will and the deed, when the will is inclined unto that which is good. The like may be said of David’s willingness and desire to build a temple unto the Lord, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. He builded it not, yet his purpose and desire to have builded it was accepted with God. And generally this is true, that the will and desire is accepted with God as the deed, so that the will, and desire, and endeavour, to walk in the ways of God, without rebuke, do plainly shew us to be the sons of God, and are accepted with God as if we walked holy and without blame. The like is to be said of striving against sin, that even the very striving against sin doth plainly shew us to be the sons of God. For proof whereof what need any other than that example of the blessed apostle Paul, who hath registered such a dangerous fight in himself between the flesh and the spirit, that it made him cry out, Rom. vii. 24, ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ And yet, because in his inner man, and in his spirit, he delighted in the law of God, he addeth immediately in the next words following, ver. 25, ‘I thank my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,’ to shew that in the strife the flesh took the foil, and he, by the power of his Lord and Christ, did stand. The assaults of the flesh made him to cry, ‘O wretched man,’ &c.; and the conquest of the Spirit made him to add, ‘I thank God,’ &c. Such a strife and fight the blessed apostle had in himself, and such a strife and fight all the children of God have within themselves; and this striving in them is a witness unto them that they are the sons of God. For to turn a little aside unto the sons of Belial, and children of disobedience, what strife or fight at all is there in them betwixt the flesh and the spirit? what denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts? what care to subdue the flesh unto the spirit? what flying of the corruptions which are in the world through lusts? what love of God or good men? what desire to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, is in them at all? Nay, contrariwise, they delight in unrighteousness, and sell themselves to work wickedness; they commit sin even with greediness, and gladly give their members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity to commit iniquity; they hate to be reformed, and cast the word behind their backs; they refuse to hearken to instruction, and stop their ears at the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. And therefore the apostle calleth them a naughty and crooked nation, because they quite pervert the straight ways of the Lord, giving their members as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, which should be given as weapons of righteousness unto God: so far are they from striving against sin, and from a desire to walk holy and without blame. Only they that are the sons of

God feel this strife and this desire within themselves; and this very strife against sin, and desire to walk after the Spirit without blame in love, shews plainly that we are the sons of God. Thus, then, ye see what should be our study in the whole course of our life, to wit, as that we may be blameless, and that we may be pure, so that we may be known to be the sons of God, even unto those amongst whom we live. Ye see likewise how this may be known, not unto others only, but unto ourselves, both unto ourselves and others, even by the Spirit of sanctification, which both ‘ witnesseth unto our spirits that we are the sons of God,’ Rom. viii. 16, and which, by the fruits and effects which it worketh in us, sheweth as much unto others. And howsoever our sanctification here in this life be imperfect, yet ye see that our very striving against sin, and our desire to be holy and without rebuke, plainly doth and may shew, both unto ourselves and unto others, that we are the sons of God. Comfort, then, thyself, O thou afflicted soul, whosoever thou art, that so groanest under the burden of thy sins, that thou wantest this sweet comfort of thy soul. For, tell me, doest thou feel in thyself a striving against sin; art thou touched with remorse and compunction of heart for thy sins; doest thou desire to lead a life according to God’s will; and hast thou a longing after this comfort that thou art the child of God? Whatsoever be thine infirmities, how crimson-dyed soever thy sins be, whatsoever doubts else thou castest, yet doubt not thou art the son of God, and unto thee belongeth the inheritance of the sons of God. For it is the Spirit, even the Spirit of sanctification, that filleth thy heart with good desires, with desire to fly that which is evil, and with desire to do that which is good; and ‘ he that hath begun this good work in thee will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,’ Philip. i. 6, when thou shalt be crowned with glory and immortality in the highest heavens. As for the wicked and ungodly of the earth, which wallow in their wickedness, and make a mock of piety and religion, which have not God in all their thoughts, nor make mention of his name with their lips, unless it be to blaspheme and dishonour his holy name, they have no part in this comfort, this rejoicing in the Spirit belongeth not unto them. But for us, beloved, let us labour and strive to have this comfort sealed unto our souls, that we are the sons of God, by our striving against sin, and our careful endeavour to walk without rebuke. Yea, let us so look unto our steps, and take heed unto our ways, let us so decline the pleasures of sin, and delight ourselves in the law of the Lord, that men, seeing the mortification of our earthly members, and the integrity of our conversation, may have nothing concerning us to speak evil of, but may say that God is in you indeed, and so may glorify him in the day of visitation.

Yea, but ye will say again unto me, How can we thus live? Is it not a naughty and crooked nation,

a froward and wicked people with whom we live? Can a man touch pitch, and not be defiled therewith? or walk amongst thorns, and not be pricked therewith? True; we live amongst wicked men, whose hearts are set on mischief, even as the apostle here saith, that the Philippians lived in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation. Yet the apostle, ye see, writeth unto them to walk so, both before God and with their neighbour, that they might be blameless and pure, and the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation; which teacheth us thus much, that howsoever ‘ the whole world lieth in wickedness.’ as the apostle speaketh, 1 John v. 19, yet may we live in the world, and amongst the enemies of the light, as children of the light, and as the sons of God, shewing ourselves to be so even unto them, by walking with all care to be without rebuke amongst them. Otherwise no doubt the apostle would have bid them to get out from amongst that naughty and crooked people, that so, being separated from them, they might not be defiled with their unclean conversation; whereas now he warneth them so to order their steps that they may be known to be the sons of God, by walking with all carefulness to be without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation. There is great danger, indeed, that we shall be defiled with pitch if we touch it, and that we shall be pricked with thorns if we walk in the midst of thorns. Proofs hereof there are too, too many in all places. Joseph being taught in the ways of God, feared God no doubt, yet, after that he had lived a while at Pharaoh’s court, he learned too readily to swear ‘ by the life of Pharaoh,’ Gen. xlvi. 15. So it is said that whilsts Israel abode in Shittim, the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, Num. xxv. 1. And common experience teacheth us that there is nothing more pernicious and dangerous than is conversing with the wicked. For such commonly we are as they are with whom we converse; and this ye shall always find to be most true, that sooner and oftener is he that is good made worse by him that is bad, than he that is bad is bettered by him that is good. Wherenpon it is that so many *cavets* are everywhere given to beware of the company and enticements of the wicked. As where it is said in the Proverbs, chap. i. 10-14, ‘ My son, if sinners do entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us,’ &c. And again, ‘ Enter not into the way of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, and go not by it; turn from it, and pass by,’ chap. iv. 14, 15. In both which places Solomon would have us to take heed of the company and fellowship of the wicked, as a thing very dangerous. And certainly so it is, and therefore great heed to be taken, lest, by conversing with the wicked, we be defiled with their unclean conversation. Our care, therefore, must be that we may, with the prophet David, protest and say, ‘ I haunt not with vain persons,

neither keep company with the dissemblers. I hate the assembly of the evil, and have no company with the wicked,' Ps. xxvi. 4, 5; for 'Blessed is the man that doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful,' Ps. i. 1. What then? Because the case so standeth, that the whole world lieth in wickedness, must we needs sever ourselves from the company of men, and either shut up ourselves in some cloister, or get us into the wilderness, there to lead a solitary life? So some have thought, and so some have done, pretending that cause that they might not be defiled with the corruptions of the world. But this is a thing altogether needless, as the example of just Lot sheweth, the integrity of whose holy conversation amongst the wicked Sodomites is registered both in the Old and New Testament, Gen. xix. 1, 2 Pet. ii. 8. If it be so, therefore, that either through the general iniquity of the time, or upon what reason else soever, we do converse and live in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, we see we may live amongst them without just rebuke as the sons of God. Neither, being thus seated amongst the wicked and ungodly, are we by and by to think of a cloister or a wilderness to dwell in, but rather we are to think of these precepts following.

First, That we 'fashion not ourselves like unto the world,' Rom. xii. 2; that is, that we grow not like unto the wicked of the world in life and manners, and so be defiled by their unclean conversation. 'For whatsoever is in the world, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world,' 1 John ii. 16. We must not therefore suffer ourselves to be entangled with these things, we must not walk in the paths of the wicked. *Secondly,* We must, by the example of just Lot, be even vexed in our souls when we see and hear the unlawful and ungodly deeds of the wicked, 2 Pet. ii. 8. As also we read of David, where he saith, Ps. cxix. 158, 'I saw the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word'; and again, ver. 136, 'Mine eyes gush out with rivers of water, because they keep not thy law'; and again, ver. 53, 'Fear is come upon me for the wicked that forsake thy law'; and again, ver. 139, 'My zeal hath even consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy word.' All which shews how we should be affected at the contempt and at the ungodly conversation of the wicked, it should even be a pain and grief unto us. *Thirdly,* We must, after the example of Noah, that preacher of righteousness, admonish the wicked of their ways, and warn them of the judgments of God against all unrighteousness and ungodliness. For albeit they scorn admonition, and make a mock of instruction, yet must we, as conveniently we may, put them in mind of such things as belong unto their peace, and accompany salvation. *Fourthly,* We must, in holiness of life and integrity of conversation amongst them, shew ourselves to be the sons of God, that if it be possible, our conversation may win

them to walk in the ways of Christ. So our Saviour willeth, saying, Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' These, I say, are the precepts which, if we follow, we need not to think of cloister, or of desert, or of going out of the world, but we may live with a pure conscience, and as the sons of God, be the sons of men never so wicked amongst whom we live. This I say we may do. Howbeit I do not hereby encourage any either to thrust himself into the company of the wicked when he need not, or longer to stay amongst them than he should. But this I exhort, especially that ye fashion not yourselves like unto the wicked of the world, and next, that ye avoid the company of the wicked and ungodly. At no hand suffer yourselves to be defiled by their unclean conversation, and if ye may, keep yourselves from their assemblies. In a word, study to be the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation; and the more wicked that they are with whom ye live, be ye the more careful of your conversation, that it be such as becometh the sons of God, that thereby they may be drawn, if it be possible, to glorify God in the day of visitation, or at least they may have nothing concerning you to speak evil of, always remembering that by grace and adoption we are severed from them to be the sons of God.

Lastly, Henee I note what we are by nature before we be regenerate and born again by the Spirit: we are even 'a naughty and crooked nation,' as the apostle here speaketh; 'an evil and adulterous generation,' as our Saviour speaketh, Mat. xii. 39; 'a froward and crooked generation,' as Moses speaketh, Deut. xxxii. 5; 'a faithless and stubborn generation,' as David speaketh; 'a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of the wicked, corrupt children,' as Isaiah speaketh, Isa. i. 4; 'children of wrath, and children of disobedience,' as the apostle speaketh, Eph. ii. 2, 3; 'our thoughts wicked, our will depraved, our understanding darkened, our throats open sepulchres, our tongues full of deceit,' &c., Rom. iii. 13, &c.: so un-pure, that even our minds and consciences are defiled; so untoward, that we clean pervert the straight ways of the Lord, and instead of giving our members weapons of righteousness unto God, making them weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, and instead of serving God, altogether yielding ourselves servants unto sin. Most miserable and wretched is our state, darkness without light, ignorance without understanding, foolishness without wisdom, before such time as all mists of darkness, ignorance, and foolishness be expelled by the bright beams of God's Holy Spirit, and we brought unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Yea, and such thou standest, as by nature thou art, whosoever thou art that sleepest* in sin and delightest in unrighteousness, making no conscience of thy ways, but treasuring unto thyself wrath against the day of

* Qu. 'steepest'?—ED.

wrath, and of the declaration of the just judgment of God. But thou that fearest God, and walkest in his ways, consider from what bondage and into what freedom the Lord hath brought thee; how, of a child of wrath, of death, and of hell, he hath brought thee into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and made thee an heir of everlasting glory; how he hath sanctified thy corrupt will, and heart, and understanding; how he hath new moulded thee, and framed thee, and renewed thee; how he hath begotten thee again, not by flesh and blood, but by the immortal seed of his holy word: consider these things, I say, and let them be as goads and spurs unto thee, to stir thee up, as unto thankfulness to thy God, so unto obedience to his will.

Hath he made thy darkness to be light? Walk not in the unfruitful works of darkness. Hath he freed thee from the bondage of sin? Fly from sin as from a serpent, and have nothing to do with the stool of wickedness. Hath he sanctified thy will, and all the powers and faculties of thy soul? Glorify thou thy God with all the powers and faculties of thy soul. Hath he washed and cleansed thee both in thy body and in thy spirit? Glorify thy God both in thy body and in thy spirit. So shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty; so shalt thou make true and right use of thy natural corruption, and of thy regeneration by God his Spirit; and so shalt thou shew thyself to be the son of God without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation.

LECTURE XXXVII.

Among whom ye shine, as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life.—PHILIP. II. 15.

AMONG whom ye shine, &c. In this last clause of the apostle's former reason, we have a notable commendation of the Philippians, which the apostle so truly giveth unto them, that withal, in the wisdom of God given unto him, he doth imply a duty, or an exhortation that they shew themselves to be such as he commendeth them to be, insomuch that some read these words thus, 'Among whom do ye shine, as lights,' &c. Their commendation, ye see, is that they shine amongst that naughty and crooked people with whom they live, even as lights which shine in darkness, and which hold forth the word of life, to give light to them that sit in darkness; they are called lights, shining lights, lights shining in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, lights holding forth the word of life unto others. The whole form of speech seemeth to be drawn from those high places by the sea coast, whence continually lights and fires are set out for the direction of seamen into the haven and safest entrance. For even such the apostle commendeth the Philippians to be, lights which shined in holiness of life unto them that sat in darkness round about them, by the direction of which their light they might come into the haven of everlasting rest, where they might find rest for their souls. Now let us see what we may observe hence for our use.

1. In that the apostle calleth the Philippians light, I note the singular prerogative and honour of all the faithful members of Christ Jesus. For that which the apostle here giveth to the Philippians, belongeth to all the faithful. All the faithful children of Christ are called lights, shining lights, lights shining in the world. Now for our better instruction how they are called lights, we are to understand that there are four special lights mentioned in the holy Scriptures. The first is that light Christ Jesus, the light of the world, and the brightness of his Father. This light, by a principal prerogative, is called 'that light,' that 'true light'

which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, that Sun of righteousness, that star of Jacob, that day-spring from on high, that brightness of his Father's person. 2. The word of God in many places of the Scriptures is termed a light, as where it is said, Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word, O Lord, is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths;' as also where the godly are commended by the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. i. 19, for that they attend unto the 'sure word of the prophets, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.' By this light the Holy Ghost illuminateth the blindness and darkness of our gross understandings, and directeth us in the ways of God, which lead unto salvation. 3. The apostles and ministers of Christ Jesus are called lights, as where our Saviour saith unto them, Mat. v. 14, 'Ye are the light of the world;' which glorious title is given unto them, both because of that testimony which they give unto that true light, the everlasting Son of God, Christ Jesus, and because of the gospel of Christ Jesus which they preach unto us. 4. All the faithful members of Christ Jesus, all Christians, are called lights; as where the apostle calleth the Ephesians that they were 'once darkness, but are now light in the Lord,' and therefore exhorteth them to 'walk as children of the light,' Eph. v. 8; and in this place of our apostle, where they are called 'lights in the world, shining among the sons of darkness, and holding forth the word of life.'

Now, the faithful are called lights in these respects:—(1.) In respect of Christ Jesus, that true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, inasmuch as he hath vouchsafed to communicate his light unto us, and by the bright beams of his Holy Spirit shining into our hearts, to expel thence the thick mists of blindness, darkness, and ignorance. For whatsoever light the faithful have, they have it from him who hath light in himself, and of himself, and in whom is no darkness. They borrow their

light from him, even as the moon and the stars do borrow their light from the sun in the firmament. For he is the Sun of righteousness which, springing from on high, hath through the tender mercy of our God visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace; and so far as this light shineth unto them their darkness is turned into light, and they are termed lights of that light which they have from this Sun of righteousness. So that when the Holy Ghost calleth the faithful lights, he noteth therein the fellowship which they have with Christ Jesus, from whose most clear light they borrow their light. (2.) The faithful are called lights in respect of the word, inasmuch as they believe, and embrace, and profess the holy word of God, which he hath ordained to be a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our steps. For albeit it be the Sun of righteousness alone by the bright shining beams of whose Holy Spirit our darkness is turned into light, and we made lights in the world, yet because we receive this light by the ministry of the word, therefore both the word itself is called light, and they likewise that receive the word with gladness, and walk in the light thereof, are called lights. Forasmuch, then, as the faithful profess the holy word of God, ordained to be the rule of our life and our direction in matters of religion, in respect of this profession they are called lights. (3.) They are called lights in respect of their life and conversation, inasmuch as by the holiness of their life, and integrity of their conversation, they shew themselves to be exempted and delivered from the power of darkness. Both their works, in respect of the unfruitful works of darkness, are called lights, and themselves glorifying God by these works are called lights. Now see what instruction these things may minister unto us.

1. In that the faithful are called lights, not from any light in themselves as of themselves, but from that light which they have and borrow from Christ Jesus, that Sun of righteousness, this may teach us what we are without Christ Jesus, even darkness without light, men sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. For look into the best things that we have. Our reason, what is it but gross darkness? our wisdom, what is it but mere foolishness? our understanding, what is it but blind ignorance? For 'the natural man,' i.e. he on whom this Sun of righteousness hath not yet shined, 'perceiveth not,' nay, he cannot perceive by all the reason, wisdom, and understanding that he hath, 'the things of the Spirit of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 14. And therefore the apostle, writing to the Ephesians, calleth them thus, chap. v. 8, 'Ye were once darkness,' to wit, before the Sun of righteousness had shined upon them, 'but are now light in the world;*' now that the Sun of righteousness had shined upon them, their darkness

* Qu. 'Lord'?—ED.

was turned into light; where he most plainly sheweth what is the state of all men, both before and after the Sun of righteousness have shined upon them. Before, they are darkness; after, they are light. Oh, what a good and gracious God, then, have we, who, when we sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, gave us this light, and so translated us out of darkness into light! Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise, for that thou hast called us out of darkness into thy marvellous light! When we walked in darkness, thou madest us to see a great light, and when we dwelled in the land of the shadow of death, thou didst cause the light to shine upon us. We were once darkness, but now we are light. Blessed be thy name, O Lord, which hast changed our darkness into light!

2. In that the faithful are called lights, in respect of the word which they profess, and in the light whereof they walk, this may teach us how precious the holy word of God ought to be unto us. If, walking after the direction of the word, we only walk in the light, then judge ye how we walk without the word. Surely without it we walk in darkness, and know not whither we go, no more than the blind or blindfolded man, who, not discerning his way, quickly wandereth out of his right path, and walketh into every by-path, and runneth himself upon every danger. For by the word alone we deserv every by-path, we see every danger that is to be avoided, and understand the glory that is prepared for us at the end of our journey. And yet, as if either we loved darkness better than light, or else know not that, by the ministry of the word of darkness, we are made light in the Lord, we care not for the word, we regard it not, we let it pass as a tale that is told. A hard saying truly, but yet as true as hard. For if we shall consider our great slackness in coming, or our great negligence in hearing, or our great carelessness to lay up in our hearts the things that we have heard, all these will witness what account we make of the word, even no more than of a tale that is told. Otherwise how should it be, which hath been observed, that since this exercise begun, not half of that congregation which should be here present, have been assembled in this house of the Lord at any one sermon? Again, a great slackness in coming of those that do come; howsoever they may be observed which either come too late, or depart too quickly from this holy exercise; yet who knoweth how many depart hence as little edified and instructed as when they came hither? A great negligence in hearing. Again, who is he that, having heard the word, doth afterward think or meditate with himself of the things that he hath heard, and layeth them up in his heart, to make them the rule and direction of his life? A great carelessness, to make that nse we should of that we have heard. And what else do all these argue, but that we make no more account of the word than of a tale that is told? Well, whatsoever account we make of it,

either we must walk in the light of this word, or else we cannot be such lights as here the faithful members of Christ Jesus are said to be ; either this word must be a light unto our paths, or else we can be no light in the Lord ; either the Lord must go before us in this word, as in a pillar of fire, or else we shall be made a prey unto our enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, who seeketh continually, like a roaring lion, whom he may devour.

3. Thirdly, in that the faithful are called lights in respect of their holy life and conversation, this may teach us what manner of conversation will best become us if we will be lights in the world. The light of our holiness of life and integrity of conversation must so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. ‘Ye were once darkness,’ saith the apostle to the Ephesians, chap. v. 8, ‘but are now light in the Lord ; walk as children of the light.’ In which words the apostle plainly sheweth that, being made lights, we ought to walk as children of the light, approving that which is pleasing unto the Lord, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reproving them, if not by word, for that we cannot all at all times do, yet at least by the example of our holy and unblameable life. But of this we shall have more occasion anon to speak. Let this suffice to be spoken generally, why the faithful children of God are called lights, and of the instructions which the reasons thereof may minister unto us.

Secondly, Here I note two qualities attributed to these lights mentioned by the apostle. The first, they shine in the midst of darkness, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation ; secondly, they hold out unto others the light that is in them, even the word of life, shewing itself in the integrity of their conversation. Whence I note two properties necessarily requisite in all the faithful children of God : the one is, that they have light in themselves ; the other is, that they communicate it to others. Touching the first ; light, ye know, is not called light, unless it have light in itself, in whatsoever darkness it shine. The faithful children of God then, if they will be, as here they are called, lights, they must still so look unto themselves and their own ways, that howsoever they walk amongst the children of darkness, yet they suffer not that light which is in them to be darkened, but that they shine as lights in the world, amongst them whose hearts are set on mischief. The sun, when it setteth forth as a giant to run his course, casteth forth his beams, and they are dispersed throughout all places of the earth. And albeit, oftentimes, it light and shine upon most loathsome and filthy places, yet still doth it remain in his own purity, not at all defiled therewith. Herein these lights (I mean the faithful children of God) must resemble this light of the sun. It cannot be that they should not at all converse with wicked and ungodly men, for then they must go out

of the world, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. v. 10 ; but herein they must be as lights ; though they live amongst wicked and ungodly men, yet must they keep themselves unstained of the corruptions which are in the world through lusts ; though they have to do with profane and impure men, yet must they retain still within themselves the purity of the sons of God. And therefore the apostle, in the place before alleged, thus exhorteth, ‘Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.’ He doth not simply forbid all fellowship with the *children* of darkness, but with the unfruitful *works* of darkness, such as are gluttony and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying, and the like ; with the filthiness of these, and the like fruits of sin, he would have us not to defile ourselves. ‘For what fellowship,’ as saith the apostle, ‘hath light with darkness?’ Surely no more than hath righteousness with unrighteousness, the believer with the infidel, or Christ with Belial. If, then, we be such lights as here the faithful children of God are termed, no question we hate all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness ; and, if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, then we are no such lights. A rule whereby ye may quickly try and examine whether ye have that light in yourselves which ye hear the faithful children of God should have in themselves. Light, where it is, expelleth all darkness. If, then, ye have the light of the sons of God within yourselves, ye have no delight in the works of darkness. Now, what the works of darkness are, ye know out of the apostle, even ‘gluttony and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying,’ and generally all the works of the flesh, even whatsoever things are such as the doing wherof may not well abide the light. Examine yourselves of these things, and condemn yourselves, that ye be not condemned of the Lord. If any of you be tainted with any of these things, purge out this old leaven, that ye may be a new lump ; cleanse your vessels from these filthy dregs, I mean yourselves from these pollutions of sin, that ye may be an holy temple unto the Lord. True it is, God alone is light without any darkness, and there is no child of God whose light is not dimmed with some darkness. But this is no ground for thee, that therefore thou mayest wallow in wickedness, and mayest delight thyself in the works of darkness. Thou, if thou wilt be the child of God, thou must come as near unto God as thou canst ; as he is light without darkness, so thou must strive thereunto. And, therefore, thou must strive to abandon all sin and wickedness, thou must be careful to walk honestly as in the day, thou must approve in thine heart, and in thy word, and in thy works, that which is pleasing to the Lord. And this, if thou doest, whatsoever is wanting shall be imputed* unto thee, and the light that is in Christ Jesus shall be thine, and expel whatsoever darkness is in thee.

* Qu. ‘imparted’?—ED.

Suffer, therefore, the same words of exhortation that the apostle useth to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 17, ‘Walk not henceforth as others do, in vanity of their mind,’ &c. And again, with the same apostle, Rom. xiii. 12, I say unto you, ‘The night is past, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast away the works of darkness,’ &c. Have light in yourselves, and communicate the light that is in you unto others; which is the second quality mentioned here by the apostle.

The second quality which I noted here in these lights, in the Philippians, is that they held forth the word of life unto others. How? Not so much in word and talk, as that by the example of their life they gave plain proof that the word of life dwelt in them plenteously. Whence I noted another quality necessarily requisite in all the children of God, which is, that they have not only light in themselves, but they also communicate the same unto others. The children of God must not think it enough to keep themselves unspotted of the world, but they must, by word, and deed, and example of life, help to pull others out of the fire. The prophet describing the wicked man by certain fruits of the flesh, amongst other things, saith he, Ps. l. 18, ‘When thou sawest a thief, thou rankest with him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers.’ But the faithful servant of God must not only be no such man as will run with others unto mischief, but he must reprove the sins of unfaithfulness, either by word, or at least by example of life, that either by word, or by example of life he may reclaim the wicked from the wickedness of his ways. The sun (ye know) keepeth not his light unto itself, but communicateth it to the benefit of all creatures under heaven. The moon and the stars likewise, which have their light from the sun, do the like. The like also must the sons of God do. That light which they have by their fellowship with Christ Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, whether it be the light of the knowledge of God’s will revealed in his word, or the light of the Spirit of sanctification, all the light that is in them they must communicate to the benefit of their brethren, doing good unto all, and turning many unto righteousness. And albeit the ministers of Christ, and dispensers of God’s holy mysteries, ought especially to be such lights as now we speak of, holding out the word of life unto others, and turning many unto righteousness, both by word and by example of life, yet we see that also all the faithful children of God ought to be such lights, as having the word of life in them, shew plainly that they have it; in that the fruit thereof breaketh forth in them, sometimes in word, and always in example of life, unto the benefit of their brethren. The word of life must be hid even in the hearts of all the sons of God, and it they must hold out in holiness of life, and good example unto their brethren. Yea, what! so general? No exception of countrymen, of artificers, of simple women, of poor labourers? Must all be lights holding forth the word of life? This surely

is rather for scholars, and ministers, and learned men, whose employment is in that study, and who make that their profession! Belike, then, the apostle was deceived; for by the apostle it doth plainly appear, that all the sons of God should be lights, holding forth the word of life; so that from the word of life hid in their hearts, as from the root, should spring all the fruits of that light which they should communicate unto the benefit of others. True it is, that as one star differeth from another in glory, so amongst the sons of God, some are more clear and bright shining lights than others, some better instructed and taught in the word of life than others; for some are ordained to teach, some to be taught; some by hearing only, some both by hearing and reading, grow up in the knowledge of the word of life. Yet still this is true, that in all the sons of God there should be some measure of the knowledge of the word of life, whereof they should make show, at least in holiness of their life, and integrity of their conversation, whereby they might draw others unto God. And as it should be, so it were to be wished it were. But so far are we from holding out the word of life in holiness of life unto others, that by our profaneness and wickedness a great many of us shew plainly that the word of life is not in us. How ready we are, every one of us, to run with another unto mischief, to spend the time, one with another, in excess, and riot, and unthriftiness, to deceive, oppress, wrong, revile, and shame one another if we can, he seeth little that seeth not. Again, how slow we are to provoke one another to godliness and good works, to draw one another out of the snares of the devil, that we be not taken and holden therewith, to stir up one another unto peace, and love, and meekness, and temperance, and patience, and alms-deeds, and brotherly kindness, and other such like fruits of the Spirit, who seeth not that seeth aught? And if these things be so, how can we think that the word of life is in us? Certainly where it is, it maketh the man of God so to abound in every good work, and so to hate every work of the flesh, so to shine in himself, and likewise to give light unto others, that it doth easily appear that God is in him indeed. Take heed, therefore, lest the light which seemeth to be in you be indeed darkness. Have light in yourselves, and communicate the light that is in you, one with another. Hate the sins of unfaithfulness, and the works of darkness, both in yourselves and in others. Provoke one another to godliness and to good works, and hold forth the word of life, in all holiness of life, one unto another. Remember that ye are lights; walk therefore as children of the light. It is a title wherein the ministers of Christ Jesus do worthily glory, that they are the lights of the world. Ye see that not they alone, but ye also, are lights of the world, if ye be the faithful children of God. Strive herein to be as near unto thy God as thou canst, that so thy light may shine, that there be no darkness at

all in thee ; and make it a great part of thy study and delight, by the light that is in thee to bring others out of darkness into light. And let this suffice to be spoken touching this honour given to the saints of God, that they are called lights, and touching the qualities required in these lights, namely, that they have light in themselves, and that they communicate it unto others.

The last thing which I note in these words is, the glorious title given unto the word of God. The word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ, ye see, is here called the word of life. So likewise Peter calleth it when he saith unto Christ, ' Master, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life,' John vi. 68. So likewise the angel calleth it, where, having brought the apostles out of prison, he saith unto them, Acts v. 20, ' Go your way, and stand in the temple, and speak to the people all the words of this life.' Now the reasons why the word of God and the gospel of Christ Jesus is called the word of life are many. As, first, it is called the word of life, because by it we are begotten and born again unto a new life, even a spiritual life in Christ Jesus, as the apostle Peter witnesseth, saying, 1 Peter i. 23, ' Love one another with a pure heart fervently, being born anew, not of mortal seed, but of immortal, by the word of God.' Secondly, it is called the word of life, because ' it is the power of God unto salvation unto all them that believe,' Rom. i. 16, and ' the savour of life unto life in them that are saved,' as witnesseth the apostle, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Thirdly, it is so called, because therein Christ, which is our life, and who is properly called the Word of life, is preached and offered unto us, together with all the benefits of his blessed death and passion. Lastly, it is so called, because it is the lantern unto our feet, and the light unto our steps, to direct us in the right way, that leadeth to eternal life and salvation. Here must all other writings in the world whatsoever stand back. No word of life but this ; nay, indeed, no word but this, for no man's writing whatsoever was ever called the word. Only the word of God, that is the word, and that is the word of life. I meddle not now with those other glorious titles given to the word in holy Scriptures, as that it is called the word of God, the wholesome word of truth, the gospel of salvation, &c.

Even this, that it is called the word of life, may teach us how precious the ministry and preaching thereof ought to be unto us, even more precious than thousands of gold and silver, than all the fine gold of Ophir. Even as we love our souls, and as we desire to be saved in the day of Christ, so should we thirst after these most sweet waters of life. But what thirsting is there after them ? They are brought unto us

in conduits, even unto our doors, and yet we will scarce step out of our doors to drink of them ; nay, we will sit in our doors and in our houses, talking and sleeping, rather than we will come into the house of God, and drink of these waters. Every light excuse, and every small business, will serve to stay us from coming to hear the word read and preached. I told you even now of our slackness in coming, of our negligence in hearing, of our carelessness to meditate after we have heard, of the holy word of life. If I should add unto that complaint another, of profaning the Lord's day, which should be wholly spent in hearing, and reading, and meditating of the holy word of life, of profaning it, I say, with dancing, and drinking, and playing at this or that game, or keeping this or that unprofitable and unnecessary observation and esteem, should I justly be reproved ? Yea, but this ye do in the morning or in the evening, not in service-time of day ; yea, but this ye do on the Lord's day, which the Lord hath commanded to be kept holy, not only in service-time of day, but ' remember,' saith he, ' that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.' He doth not limit it to this or that part of the day, but keep the day holy, by hearing, and reading, and meditating in the holy word of life. Yea, but this is too precise and strait, and savours too much of puritanism. Well, be it as it will, thou must either be a puritan in observation of the commandment, or else thou bringest upon thyself judgment. Oh consider this, men and brethren, what it is that we call you unto. It is the word of life, by which you must be begotten unto eternal life, or else you cannot be saved ; by the direction and guidance whereof you must enter into rest, or else you shall never find rest unto your souls. David, when he could not be present in the assembly of God's people, to praise his God and hear his word, because of his persecutors, he thought the sparrows and the swallows happy that might nestle themselves in the house of God, insomuch that he brake out, as Ps. xlvi. 1, 2, lxxxiv. 1-10. Our ease is not as David's was ; we may come. We should say, therefore, with David in another place, Ps. cxxii. 1, ' I was glad,' &c. Yea, we should call one unto another, and say, as it is in Isaiah, chap. ii. 8, ' Come, and let us go up,' &c. *Scrutamini Scripturas*, &c., John v. 39. ' Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously,' &c., Col. iii. 16. In a famine of bread, ye need no exhortation to seek for bread to refresh and sustain your bodies. Your souls [are] far more precious than your bodies ; and your souls hunger-starved, and yet what care for your souls ? The sickness is most dangerous when it is least felt.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain, &c.—PHILIP. II. 16-18.

THUS far of the former reason, and of the uses thence to be made by us heretofore. Now followeth the latter reason, drawn from the apostle himself, in these words, ‘that I may rejoice in the day of Christ,’ &c.

That I may rejoice, &c. This is the apostle his latter reason, whereby he would enforce his former exhortations; and it is as if he had said, My beloved, I exhort you that you make an end of your own salvation with fear and trembling, and that ye do all things with your neighbours and brethren without murmuring and reasonings; and these things I would have you to do, as for your own sakes, ‘that ye may be blameless and pure,’ &c.; so for my sake also, ‘that I may rejoice,’ &c. Yea, and if ye mark it, even in these words he would have them to do as he hath exhorted them, both for his sake and for their sakes also. For he would have them to walk before God in all obedience, with fear and trembling, and with their neighbour in all love, without murmuring, &c. Why? That he may rejoice; that is for his own sake. But wherein doth he desire to rejoice? Even in their salvation, that he hath not run in vain, nor laboured in vain amongst them, but that by his ministry and apostleship they are gained unto Christ: ‘That I may rejoice in the day of Christ,’ &c. By the day of Christ, the apostle meaneth that day when God shall judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ, that day of Christ his second coming unto judgment, when it shall be rendered unto every man according to that he hath done in his flesh, be it good or evil; as also in many other places of the New Testament. This day is called sometimes ‘the day of God’s wrath,’ sometimes ‘the day of his appearing,’ sometimes ‘the day of judgment,’ sometimes ‘the great day,’ sometimes ‘that day,’ sometimes ‘the day of the Lord,’ sometimes ‘the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, sometimes ‘the day of Christ.’ Now that day of Christ his second coming unto judgment is therefore called the day of Christ, because in that day God shall give all judgment unto him, and he shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and all shall appear before his judgment-seat, and he shall separate the sheep from the goats, and set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left, and shall say to the one, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father,’ and to the other, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed.’ Now the apostle would have the Philippians so to walk, both before God and men, that in this day of Christ, when he shall give to every man according as his work shall be, he may rejoice; wherein? That he hath not run in vain, &c., i.e. that by his labours he hath gained

them unto Christ. The manner of speech which the apostle useth seemeth to be borrowed from them that ran in a race, wherein, though many run, and labour hard toward the mark, yet one alone receiveth the price, and the rest run in vain and labour in vain, because they obtain not the price or the thing which they run for. So the apostle maketh his account that, in respect of them, he should be like unto those that run in vain and labour in vain, if, having laboured to gain them unto Christ, they should not walk worthy of Christ. This, therefore, in this place, is the sum of the apostle his desire, that the Philippians would so walk worthy of Christ, both before God and with their brethren, that, in the day of Christ, when his labours in the Lord should not be in vain, he might rejoice that he had not spent his strength amongst them in vain, but, by his preaching of Christ Jesus unto them, had gained them unto Christ, who should then give, both unto him and them, the crown of salvation for their glory. This is the sum and the sense likewise of that which the apostle speaketh in this place. Now let us see what use we may make hereof for ourselves.

Here, then, I, I note that the salvation of God’s people is the joy and crown of the faithful minister of Christ in the day of Christ. This shall be his glory in that day with his Christ, whose minister he is, that he hath gained many unto Christ. And therefore this our apostle, in another place, calleth the Philippians, chap. iv. 1, ‘his joy and his crown,’ whereby he signifieth both the present joy and comfort which he taketh in them, and the sure hope which he hath that they shall be his joy and his crown in the day of the Lord. To the like purpose he writeth to the Thessalonians, saying, 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20, ‘what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Yes, ye are our glory and joy.’ When? Not only now present, but in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming. As plain to this purpose is that in the last of Daniel, where he saith, chap. xii. 3, that ‘they that turn many unto righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever,’ which, no doubt, is principally meant of the ministers of Christ Jesus. And if it shall be said, in that day, unto every good and faithful servant, ‘It is well done, good servant and faithful, enter into thy Master’s joy,’ Mat. xxv. 21, how much more shall it be said so unto the faithful minister of Christ Jesus. What greater encouragements can there be unto the ministers of Christ Jesus to make them faithful and painful in their places, to make them labour with all alacrity and cheerfulness to gain many unto Christ, to turn many unto righteousness? Oh, but there are many

discouragements, for who more contemned, who more disdained, who more hated, who more disgraced than the ministers of Christ Jesus? True it is, and it is the shame of our times, that they are counted of many as the very offscourings of the world, and the more faithful that they are, the more they are hated, and oftentimes the more persecuted. If we sew cushions under all arm-holes; if we speak smoothing and fawning words; if we cry Peace, peace, all is well; if we meddle not with the sins of the people, but only teach a truth in a generality, haply we shall please, or not displease, but live in rest and quiet. But if we lift up our voices like trumpets, and tell the house of Jacob their sins, and the house of Israel their transgressions; if we search, and cut up, and lancet the sores of our people; if we sharply reprove such and such sins, whereof their own consciences condemn them to be guilty: then they begin to hate us, to disgrace us, to persecute us, to traduce us as cursed *Hams*, as seditious fellows, and troublers of the state, and to speak all manner of evil sayings against us. Herod, ye know, ‘when he heard John, did many things, and heard him gladly,’ Mark vi. 20; but after that John had reproved him for his incest, he quickly lost his head, Mat. xiv. 10. The Jews, likewise, heard Stephen a great while answering for himself, but when he began to come somewhat near unto them, and to touch them to the quick, when he came upon them with, ‘Ye stiff-necked, and of uncircumcised hearts and ears, ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost,’ &c., then it is said ‘that their hearts burst for anger, and that they gnashed at him with their teeth, and quickly after stoned him to death,’ Acts vii. 51, 54, 55. I say not that it fareth so at this day, for sin, God be thanked, may be boldly rebuked without fear of such danger. But this we find true by experience, that whose sore we touch, his hatred most commonly we purchase; and if we be but suspected, in our reproofs of sin, to note such and such men, we shall not want whatsoever they can say or do against us. Thus render they unto us hatred for our good will; and when we strike at the root of any sin, and wound only that we may heal, they tell us we only utter our choler or malice, and that we might well enough find ourselves other matter than to note them in our sermons. But this, as I said, is the shame of our times, that the more faithful and painful they are, the worse commonly they are entreated. But herein we comfort ourselves, that our conscience beareth us witness in what singleness of heart, as before the Lord, we do the work of our ministry, and that howsoever now, through their disgraces, and reproaches, and contempts, and hatreds, and persecutions, our rejoicing be diminished, yet our rejoicing in the day of Christ shall no man take from us; but then they that have believed, and they that have been converted from going astray out of the right way by our ministry, shall be unto us the crown of

our rejoicing. Then, for that we have laid out our talent to the best advantage we could, we shall hear that voice, ‘It is well done, good servant and faithful,’ and then those that hated us without cause, and disgraced us without our desert, shall not dare to hold up their heads against us, but shall be confounded in that day. In the mean time, if, when we have sown the seed of God’s word, many sharp showers do follow, and many black tempests overtake one another, yet must we, with the husbandman, patiently expect the time of harvest; we must in patience possess our souls until the day of Christ, and then we shall rejoice in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming, when we, and they whom we have gained unto Christ, shall meet him in the clouds, that we may be ever with the Lord. For they whom we have gained unto Christ shall be the crown of our rejoicing in that day.

Yea, but what if, when we have laboured, either we see no fruits of our labours in them that hear us, or that fruit which seemed to shoot forth in the blade do afterwards fall away and wither, as the apostle complaineth that they of Asia were turned from him, 2 Tim. i. 15, doth the glory of the minister in that day depend upon the salvation of them that hear him? Doth he run in vain, and labour in vain, if he gain not them unto Christ? Certainly of this I am persuaded, that the more souls they gain unto Christ, the more glorious shall be their crown of rejoicing. And therefore the apostle’s glory no doubt shall be exceeding glorious, by whose labours so many churches were planted, so many souls were brought unto the faith. Yet his glory in that day doth not wholly depend upon the salvation of them that hear him. The using of his talent faithfully shall be accounted unto him as gaining with it. Neither is his running and his labouring in vain in respect of himself, but only in respect of them whose hearts the Lord doth not open that they should hear, and believe, and be saved; as it is plain out of Isaiah, where Christ in his members thus complaineth, Isa. xl ix. 4, 5, ‘I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength in vain, and for nothing; but my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.’ By which words it is out of all doubt cleared, that howsoever the minister’s labour be often in vain, howsoever his strength be often spent in vain in respect of them that hear him, because thereby their hearts are not mollified and they brought unto the obedience of the faith, yet for themselves their judgment is with the Lord, and their work with their God. Though they that hear them be of such uncircumcised hearts and ears that they cannot be gained unto Christ, yet shall they be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and their God shall be their strength. To the like purpose is that in Ezekiel, where the Lord, instructing the minister and watchman of the house

of Israel in his duty, he saith, Ezek. iii. 17, 19, 21, ‘Son of man, I have made thee a watchman,’ &c. ‘If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul,’ &c. What is then the minister’s duty? To warn the wicked; and his duty is to turn from the wickedness of his ways. If the minister warn, his labour is not in vain in the Lord, he delivereth his own soul; but if the wicked, being warned, turn not from the wickedness of his ways, he dieth in his iniquity; so that his minister in respect of him hath run in vain, and laboured in vain, because he hath not reclaimed him from the wickedness of his ways.

Here, then, is a notable advertisement for them that are bearers of the word, to take heed that their watchman which is set over them spend not his strength in vain and for nothing amongst them. The minister, ye hear, he runs, he labours, he sweats, he is still playing his prizes, still trying his masteries, still ploughing up the fallow ground of your hearts in every season, yea, in season and out of season; sowing the immortal seed of the word, always on his watch-tower in cold and in heat, giving warning of every enemy which he doth deservy. Haply ye have another conceit of the minister’s labour, at least many have, that it is no such continual labour, that there is no such care or pains therein as is pretended; well, whatsoever account ye make of the labour, therein he spends his strength, and oftentimes his blood. It is for you to look unto it that he spend not his strength in vain. If he teach you the ways of the Lord, and ye receive not instruction; if he reprove such sins as break out amongst you, and ye hate to be reformed; if he call to fasting, weeping, and mourning, and ye fall to eating, drinking, and dancing; if he exhort you to study to be blameless, and pure, and the sons of God in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, and to shine amongst them as lights, holding forth the word of life, and ye give your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity to commit iniquity; in a word, if he out of the word either teach, or improve,* or correct, or instruct in righteousness, and ye refuse to hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely, what else doth he in respect of you but run in vain, and labour in vain? And if he spend his strength in vain amongst you, his work is with his God; but your blood is upon your own head, ye die in your sins, but his soul is delivered. The minister his desire is to rejoice in the day of Christ, but wherein? In your salvation. If in that day he shall not rejoice in your salvation, what do ye think will be your portion? His desire is not to run in vain, nor to labour in vain; but it is, in respect of you, that he may gain you unto Christ, for he knoweth that his labour is not in vain in the Lord. Hearken therefore and obey, and harden not your hearts as in the provocation, and as in the

day of temptation in the wilderness. If thou hearken, thou shalt be the crown of his rejoicing, and the crown of his rejoicing is in thy salvation. And in any case take heed that thou judge not amiss of him that is set over thee in the Lord, to admonish thee in thy ways; for whatsoever it is wherein he either teacheth, or improveth, or correcteth, or instructeth thee, it is that he may rejoice in the day of Christ, that he hath not run in vain nor laboured in vain. And this much of this latter reason to enforce the former exhortations.

Yea, and though I be offered, &c. The apostle, as ye have heard, urged the Philippians that they would walk in all obedience with God, and in all meekness with their brethren, even the rather for his sake, that he might rejoice over them in the day of Christ. Now, the better to enforce this reason drawn from himself, in these words he assureth them that such is his longing after their salvation, that if by his death they might be confirmed and strengthened in the faith, he would most willingly and joyfully give his life for them; and if he shall do so, he would not have them to be sorry, but to be glad and rejoice thereat. The manner of speech here used is drawn from the sacrifices of the old law, wherein the priests were commanded, after their coming into the land of Canaan, always to pour out a drink-offering upon the sacrifice that was offered, Num. xv. 7. The apostle therefore alluding herennto saith, that if his soul should now be poured out as a drink-offering upon that spiritual sacrifice of their faith, which by his ministry and apostleship they had embraced, for their farther confirmation and strengthening therein, he would be glad and rejoice with them, for that their faith by his death were strengthened.

Here, then, we may observe how zealous the pastor ought to be of the salvation of his flock. He ought with St Paul in this place to be willing to give up his life for them. ‘The good shepherd,’ saith our Saviour, John x. 11, ‘giveth his life for his sheep.’ Christ himself was indeed this good shepherd here spoken of, who, when we were yet sinners, died for us. But herein likewise he set before us a pattern how we should approve ourselves to be good shepherds. Nothing should be so dear unto us as the good of them over whom the Lord made us overseers; persecution and banishment, stripes and imprisonments, yea, the loss of life itself, must rather be endured, than their salvation be neglected. What then? Are we simply to give up our lives for our flocks? What if they be such as will be glad thereat, and rather than fail, will themselves persecute us, yea, and take our lives from us? Such sheep indeed there are as persecute their shepherd, and desire, if they can, to make him weary of his life. But this is that which now from our apostle we teach, that if our death may be for the enlarging of Christ his kingdom, and for the confirmation and increase of their faith unto whom we have preached the gospel, then we are

* That is, ‘reprove’?—En.

not to love our lives unto the death. What then? Because our death may be for the confirmation of their faith, are we to offer ourselves unto death? Nay; we may not seek death, nor willingly run ourselves into danger. But if the will of the Lord be such, that by our blood we seal that testimony which we have given to Christ Jesus, and so confirm our brethren in the things that they have heard and learned by our ministry, we are not to shrink at it, but willingly to embrace it. Yea, but the cup of death is bitter; how then can we be glad and rejoice in it? True, haply we should not greatly rejoice in that violent and untimely death, being considered in itself; but knowing that our blood is the seed of the church, and that by our death and persecution, many are made more bold to profess the gospel of Christ Jesus, we should be glad, and rejoice in the fruit that we know comes to the church by our death and persecution. And thus our Saviour by precept hath taught us to do, saying, Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are ye when men revile you, and persecute you, &c. Rejoice, and be glad; for great is your reward in heaven.' Thus the apostles likewise have taught us by example, who, when they had been cast in prison, and afterwards beaten, departed, 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ his name,' Acts v. 41. As they by precept and example have taught us, so ought we to rejoice in tribulations and persecutions, and to be glad though we be offered up upon the sacrifice of their faith, who by our ministry have believed.

Should, then, the salvation of your souls, and the confirmation of your faith, be so dear unto us, even dearer than our own lives? How ought ye then to be affected towards us and our ministry? It was a notable testimony that the apostle gave unto the Galatians, chap. iv. 15, wherein he bore them record, that, 'if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him.' Nothing more dear than their eyes, and yet so near had their souls been knit unto him in reverence and love for the gospel's sake, that they would have given him their very eyes to have done him good. Shall I say that ye ought to be thus affected towards us? I say not so; but I say that ye ought 'so to think of us as of the ministers of Christ, and disposers of the secrets of God.' Ye ought to think of us as of the ambassadors for Christ, and that we 'pray you in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech you through us.' In a word, if we ought to lay down our lives for our sheep, our sheep ought to hear our voice. And certainly, if we were so lively and Christianly touched with a feeling of the sweetness of the word of life as we should be, if the powerfulness thereof had so seasoned and seized upon our souls as it ought, then would we hear his voice, and obey him, and follow him, we would reverence and regard him for the truth's sake which he preached. It is said of Lydia,

that when she had heard Paul preach, and the Lord had so 'opened her heart, that she believed the things that Paul spake,' she was so desirous that Paul, and those that were with him, should come into her house and abide a while with her, that she never left them till she had constrained them. 'If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord,' saith she, 'come into mine house, and abide there. And she constrained us,' saith Luke, Acts xvi. 15. It seems, besides other purposes which she had, that she thought her house would be the better if she might get them into it. Not many Lydias. I wish we might have such hearers as Peter had, Acts ii. 37, that, when they had heard us, would be 'pricked in their hearts,' and say unto us, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' such as would be so careful to hear what we speak, that they would lay the same up in their hearts, and digest it in their souls. Our desire is, as I said ere-while, that our labour in the word may not be unto you in vain, but that by our ministry we may offer you up as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God. If we ought not to spare our lives unto the death for you, ye ought so to hear the word of us, that ye grow up in faith, and love, and every good work. If we ought to pour out our blood for an offering for you, for the confirming of your faith, ye ought first by faith through our ministry to be made a spiritual sacrifice unto God, that so our souls may be poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice of your faith. For both these are implied here in our apostle. We hear what pastor and people should do, and we see in daily experience what they do, even both so little answerably unto that they should do, that it may be as truly now said as it was in the prophet's time, *Like pastor, like people.* But I will not now stand farther to open and cut up these sores. Consider only in a word with me, I beseech you, a reason which methinks may be gathered from these words for the stirring up of both pastor and people unto that they should do.

If ye mark it, both the obedience of their faith which are gained unto Christ by the ministry of the word, and likewise the martyrdom and death of those that give their lives for their sheep, are, by a borrowed speech, called sacrifices and offerings. 'Though I be offered,'—there the apostle's death is called an offering,—'upon the sacrifice and service of your faith'—their faith, whereunto by his service and ministry they had obeyed, is called a sacrifice. Now, what sacrifices be these? These be the sacrifices of the New Testament; these be lively sacrifices, and holy and acceptable unto God; and these, together with the sacrifice of praise, and of the works of love, are the only sacrifices which now Christians are to offer unto their God. An end of all other sacrifices was then when Christ cried upon the cross, 'It is finished.' These only remain, and these are our reasonable serving of God. How should not this stir up both pastor

and people to do that they should! In the pastor, his burning zeal to give his life for his people; in the people, their obedience of faith by the ministry of their pastors, are their holy and Christian sacrifices, and their reasonable serving of God. And these sacrifices are now no less to be offered by us in the New Testament, than were those sacrifices of beasts and other like things to be offered in the Old Testament, and surely are far more acceptable unto God than were they. But I promised only to speak of this in a word. Now a word likewise of that that followeth.

For the same cause, &c. In these words the apostle armeth them against sorrow, if he should be offered up upon the sacrifice of their faith. As he would be glad and rejoice with them if their faith should be confirmed by his death, so he would have them likewise to be glad and rejoice with him if he by his blood should seal the testimony of their faith. What then? Must we be glad and rejoice when our best pastors and teachers are taken from us? Did not the church well, when Stephen was stoned to death, to make great lamentation for him? Acts viii. 2. Yes; no doubt they did well; and whensoever the church is deprived of any worthy member, especially of any worthy pastor and teacher, there is just cause of great sorrow. And the apostle alloweth a moderation in lamenting for the dead, so that we 'sorrow not as they that have no hope,' 1 Thes. iv. 13. And it was a part of Jechiakim's plague, that he should be buried like an ass, and none to make lamentation for him. The meaning then is, not that we should rejoice and be glad, and not mourn simply at the death of our best pastors and teachers, but that we should be glad,

and rejoice at the fruit which comes to the church by their death, if they suffer martyrdom for the confirmation of the brethren's faith. For seeing their constancy and their cheerfulness to seal that truth with their blood, which they taught and preached, this should both make us rejoice that God giveth such strength unto his saints, and likewise confirm us in the faith of Jesus Christ, and further animate us patiently to endure whatsoever tribulations for Christ his sake. The apostle himself would not, no doubt, rejoice simply in his suffering and death, but in that only thereby God should be glorified, and God's children strengthened. So we are to rejoice not simply that our pastors and teachers are taken by the hands of tyrants, and racked and martyred, but in that God vouchsafeth thus to conform them to the image of his Son, and to make their blood the seed of the church, so that thereby both the faith of them that are already in the church is confirmed, and others likewise are brought unto the faith. Here only we are to look to this *caveat*, that we do not judge of a martyr only by his suffering, but further by the cause of his suffering; for not the suffering, but the cause of his suffering, makes him a martyr. If he suffer death for the testimony of Christ Jesus, his death is well called a martyrdom; and in his death we are so to rejoice, as already ye have heard. Thus far of the reasons enforcing obedience to those exhortations which the apostle inferreth upon the example of Christ his humility and obedience, which the apostle laid as a most strong and sure ground of his exhortation unto humbleness and lowliness of mind.

LECTURE XXXIX.

And I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state, &c.—PHILIP. II. 19, 20.

AND I hope in the Lord Jesus. In this latter part of this chapter, the apostle his desire is to comfort the Philippians, and indeed to confirm them that they should not be troubled though they lived in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, as it appeareth they did *ex* verse 15, but that they should grow forward from grace unto grace, that when he should hear of them, he might hear of them to his comfort. To comfort them therefore he, 1, promiseth to send Timothy unto them, a man whom themselves knew to be a faithful minister of Christ Jesus, and to love them sincerely; 2, he putteth them in hope of his own coming shortly after unto them; 3, he telleth them that now he sendeth their faithful minister Epaphroditus unto them, and the causes why. By all which things as the Philippians were justly to be comforted, so were they so many *caveats* to warn them

that neither Timothy, nor he, nor Epaphroditus, might find any cause of grief or discomfort amongst them when they should come unto them. In his promise to send Timothy unto them, I note, 1, his promise to send him; 2, the reason why he sent him rather than any other. In his promise, (1) I note the holy limitation thereof; (2) the promise; (3) the end of sending him.

(1.) Touching the first; Paul doth not absolutely promise to send Timothy unto them, but, saith he, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus,' &c. It is to be understood that at this time when the apostle wrote these things, he was in prison at Rome, where Timothy ministered unto him, and served him in such things as he needed. Now it seems he was in hope shortly to be delivered out of prison, and then his certain resolution was first to send Timothy unto them, and then shortly after

himself to come unto them. But how the Lord would dispose of these things he knew not. Only he knew that the heart of Nero, who had cast him in prison, was in the hand of the Lord Jesus, to dispose of as seemed best to his godly wisdom, and so he loved them that he hoped the Lord Jesus would deliver him out of prison, and bring him unto them. Because, therefore, he knew not certainly how it would please the Lord to dispose of these things, he doth not absolutely promise to send Timothy unto them, but inasmuch as his love to them made him to hope the best, he saith, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus,' &c.

The lesson which hence we have to learn is this, in all things whatsoever we purpose to do, still to depend upon the will and pleasure of the Lord Jesus ; not resolutely to set down, *This or that will I do*, but with these or the like conditions and limitations, *I hope in the Lord Jesus to do it*, *If God will*, I will do it, &c. For as in God alone we live, and move, and have our being, so he alone directeth all our ways, and ordereth all our counsels as seemeth best unto his godly wisdom. We may purpose, and we may intend such and such things as come into our heads, or our occasions lead us unto, but neither lies it in us to bring the things to pass, neither do we know what shall be the event of such things as we purpose. It is God that by his special providence doth direct the event of whatsoever we purpose, even as it best pleaseth him. This is plain by divers places of Scripture, which might be alleged to this purpose. 'The heart of man purposeth his way,' saith Solomon, Prov. xvi. 9, 'but the Lord directeth his steps.' His steps. What is that? Even all men's actions, and whatsoever he taketh in hand, is governed by God, and directed as seemeth best unto him. Again, it is another proverb of Solomon : chap. xx. 24, 'The steps of man are ruled by the Lord; how can a man, then, understand his own way?' The meaning is, that whatsoever a man doth, it is wholly and only guided and ruled by God his almighty power and providence, so that he cannot possibly understand certainly the issues of his own thoughts and purposes. And therefore the prophet Jeremiah thus confesseth unto the Lord, and saith, chap. x. 23, 'O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man to walk and direct his steps ;' which the prophet spake upon occasion of Nebuchadnezzar's turning his power to go against Jerusalem, because of Zedekial's rebellion, when at his first setting forth from home, he had purposed to have made war against the Moabites and Ammonites. Such is the power of the Lord to turn the purposes and devices of man's heart which way it seemeth best unto him, so that whatsoever his purpose be, yet can he not tell what shall be the issue thereof. Nay, if we look a little farther into the matter, we shall find, that howsoever it seemeth unto man that it is in himself to purpose and devise what himself listeth, yet can he not devise or purposo anything that is good, unless God

by his grace preventing him put them in his heart ; according to that it is said, 'It is God which worketh in us both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure.' And therefore that place mentioned before, 'The heart of man purposeth his way ;' and that in the beginning of the same chapter, 'The preparations of the heart are in man,' &c. ; they are to be understood only by way of concession, as if Solomon had thus said, Be it that man hath innumerable thoughts in his heart, be it that in his head he devise this and that, as if it were in himself to purpose and devise what he would, which is not, yet 'the answer of the tongue is of the Lord,' saith Solomon. The meaning of the whole, indeed, is this, that both the thoughts of man's heart, and the words of man's mouth, are wholly guided and governed by the Lord. Not only, then, the success and event of whatsoever we purpose, but both the purposes of our hearts, by grace preventing us, and likewise the issues thereof, by grace following us, are wholly governed of the Lord. He in his special providence ordereth and disposeth all things as seemeth best unto him. We are therefore to learn wholly to depend upon him in whose hand are our hearts and all our ways ; and whatsoever it be that we purpose to do, we are not resolutely to set down, *This or that will I do*, as if our own ways were in our own hands, but still with submission unto the Lord, *I hope in the Lord Jesus*, and, *If the Lord will*. It was the apostle James his complaint, chap. iv. 13, that men, too much presuming of themselves, would set down and say, 'We will go to-day or to-morrow into such a city or such a city, we will continue there so long and so long, we will buy and sell such and such wares, and we will make such and such gain.' And I wish it might not justly be complained of at this day, that we do too, too resolutely break out into such speeches as these mentioned by the apostle, and other such like. Well, that which the apostle laid down for a rule unto them, ought also to be a rule unto us ; we ought to say in all such cases, 'If the Lord will, we will do this or that ; or as our apostle saith in this place, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus' to do this or that. This form of speech best beseemeth Christians, and, using this form of speech, we shew plainly, whatsoever it is we go about, or purpose to do, that we depend wholly upon the Lord his pleasure for the success and issue thereof, and acknowledge that only what he will shall be done therein. Howbeit I do not urge this form of speech as so precisely necessary that I put any religion therein, or condemn the omitting thereof as profane and wicked ; for I know that many godly men who gladly acknowledge that truth which I have taught, and likewise that many of the saints and servants of God, even in the holy Scriptures, have not used this form of speech always upon such occasions. Yet could I wish, and would exhort even all the children of God upon all such occasions, even precisely to observe this form of speech, and that with

such reverence and holy fear as that thereby they would plainly shew that indeed they do not forget themselves, but know that it is the Lord that ordereth them and all their ways, even as it best pleaseth him, and what success he giveth to their purposes, that they shall have, whether it be to prosper them or to overthrow them. I add this, of observing this form of speech with reverence and holy fear, because it so falleth out, I know not how, that oftentimes we use good forms of speech, wheras notwithstanding our thoughts are little set, at least not so reverently as they ought, upon that we say. For example, what more common than when we have sworn to say, 'God forgive me that I swear;' when we have done such an evil thing, to say, 'God, I ery thee mercy,' what meant I to do that; and in this that we now speak of, when we mean to do such a thing, to say, 'I'll do it, and God will;' speeches commonly used, and oftentimes, I doubt not, very well used, but oftentimes in such an idle and only customary manner, that therein we greatly offend, because thinking not what we speak, we speak not with that reverence we ought to speak. And indeed it is a plain breach of the third commandment, wherein we are forbidden to take the name of the Lord in vain; for so often is this holy name taken in vain as it is used without great reverence and fear. To conclude this point, therefore, let us learn in all things whatsoever we do, or purpose to do, still to depend upon the will and pleasure of the Lord; let us, by the very form of speech which we use, shew that we do so, saying with our apostle, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus to do such a thing;' or, with James, 'If God will and give leave I will do such a thing;' and these words let us use with all reverence and holy fear, as speaking from our heart that which proceedeth out of our lips. Thus much of the limitation of the promise. The promise followeth.

To send Timotheus shortly unto you. This was the apostle his promise, to send Timothy unto them. Who Timotheus was appeareth out of Acts xvi. 1: his mother a Jewess, his father a Grecian, a man famously known and much renowned by reason of those two epistles which Paul wrote unto him; whom Paul sometimes calls his companion, sometimes a minister of God, sometimes his brother and fellow-helper in the gospel of Christ, sometimes his beloved son, sometimes his natural son in the faith. The apostle therefore, knowing that the Philippians lived in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, and being advertised by Epaphroditus their minister that they were troubled with certain false apostles which gloried in their circumcision, promiseth for their comfort to send Timothy unto them.

And this commendeth unto us the godly care that ought to be in the minister of Jesus Christ toward his people, to comfort them in all their distresses. The same care that Paul had to comfort them by sending a faithful minister unto them, the same ought now the

minister of Christ to have to comfort his people by the ministry of the word. We are not now to send others; we have now our standings appointed unto us, and therein we are to labour to be such comfort unto our people by the ministry of the word as Paul purposed that Timothy should be unto them. Yet, how it falls out I know not, but so it is, though we be neither apostles, but tied unto our several charges, nor lie in prison, that we cannot come ourselves, but live at ease in other places following our own pleasures, yet will we, as Paul here did unto them, send unto our people, not Timotheus, but such as are not at all able to minister a word in due season. But I only touch this; this place of Scripture, as methinks, urging me thereunto, the enlarging of the point being more fit for other places than this.

The end wherefore he sent Timothy unto them was, as here he saith, that he might be comforted when he knew their estate. In that he saith, 'That I also may be of good comfort,' this doth plainly shew that which I noted before in the promise, that the apostle meant to send Timothy unto them that they might be comforted by his ministry. For so he saith, 'I trust,' &c., 'to send,' &c., that I also may be of good comfort, i. e. that as you shall be comforted by his coming to you and his ministry among you, so I likewise may be comforted when at his returning from you he shall tell me your state, that you stand in the faith, and in the fellowship which ye have with other churches in the gospel of Christ Jesus.

Here, then, we may observe a note of true Christianity, and sincere love, which is to be so mutually careful one for another that we rejoice one in another's good, and that we be sorry one at another's misery; a thing whereunto if either precept, or example, or nature may stir us up, we cannot want incitements thereunto. 'Rejoice,' saith the apostle, Rom. xii. 15, 'with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep;' where, ye see, the apostle his rule and precept is, that we be so mutually affectioned one unto another, that the joy of one may be the joy of another, and the grief of one may be the grief of another, being so knit together with the bond of Christianity, that both we rejoice and likewise weep together. Now see the practice of this rule in the apostle himself; for, as touching rejoicing, doth he not, in the beginning of all his epistles almost, testify his comfort and rejoicing in all those churches for that they continued in the faith, and rejoiced in the gospel of Christ? How often doth he begin his epistles with this, and the like, saying, 'I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you in Christ Jesus,' &c.? All his epistles to the churches, save that to the Galatians, have this or the like beginning; whereby he signifieth his rejoicing in their joy in the Holy Ghost. Likewise touching weeping and sorrowing at the grief of others, he saith, 2 Cor. xi. 29, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak; who is offended and I burn

not?' As if he should have said, such is my care of all the churches, and so is my soul knit unto them, that the things that happen unto them I count to happen unto myself; so that as their joy is my joy, so their weakness is my weakness, their scandal is my scandal, and their grief is my grief. What should I bring other examples to this purpose? Doth not even nature teach this mutual care one of another, and this mutual affection one towards another? In the members of our body, if one member suffer, do not all the members suffer with it; and if one member be had in honour, do not all the members rejoice with it? 1 Cor. xii. 26. Let but the toe be pricked, head and hands, and all bow down to help it, and are grieved with it; let the hungry belly be satisfied, all the rest of the members are refreshed and cheered therewithal. And, as it is in the members of the natural body, so should it be in the members of the mystical body. All we, my brethren, are baptized by one Spirit into one body; we are all members of Christ Jesus, and every one another's members, if we be indeed the sons of God; we should therefore be so affectioned one towards another, as both the precept of the apostle, and the example of the apostle, both here, and often elsewhere, and as nature itself, doth teach us; we should be so mutually careful one of another, that we should be comforted one in another's comfort, and grieved one in another's grief; our joy should be the joy one of another, our sorrow should be the sorrow one of another, and our affections should be mutual one towards another. But look generally into the church; do we take comfort in the state of such churches as we ought to be comforted in? And again, are we grieved for the state of other churches which we ought to be grieved for? Nay, I fear me that the state of such churches as should comfort us doth grieve us, and that we are not grieved for the state of other churches which should grieve us. Look particularly into ourselves, is it a comfort unto us when we know of the good state one of another; and is it a grief unto us when we hear of the decayed state one of another? Nay, commonly we repine when we see the state of others better than our own, either in wealth, or in honour, or in favour, or the like; and commonly we are glad when we see another, especially if he be of the same trade and profession with us, go down the wind, as we say. We joy not one in the joy of another, we grieve not one in the grief of another; but contrariwise, we rather joy one in the grief of another, and grieve one in the joy of another. Well, such rejoicing and such grieving are not good. Let us, even so many as fear God, be otherwise affected one towards another; let us take comfort in the good one of another, in the growing up in wealth, in honour, in favour, in knowledge, in wisdom, and in every good grace of the Spirit one of another; and let us be grieved in the misery, in the penury, in the trouble, in the sorrow, in the ignorance, in the badness one of another. And

if we shall do this, so many precepts of love and charity shall not be needful for us, but by the fruits of an unfeigned love we shall shew ourselves to be Christians indeed; for this is an undoubted note of true Christianity, and of sincere love, so mutually to be careful one for another, that we rejoice one in another's good, and be sorry one at another's grief or misery. Now followeth the reason why he sent him.

For I have no man like-minded, &c. This is the reason why he rather sendeth Timothy than any of the rest that were with him, because of all that were with him none were like-minded in general to do their duty in their ministry, and none which in particular would so faithfully and sincerely care for their matters, and for the good of their church as would he. A great commendation of Timothy which was sent, great love iu the apostle to send such a man unto them, and very behoveful for them to receive such a man sent in such love with all gladness, and to make much of such: all points very well worthy a large discourse, but I can only point at them. The commendation of Timothy [is] a very fit pattern of a man meet to be commended to the work of the ministry, and to be placed over a congregation, to serve in the tabernacle. He should be such a one as in general hath a prompt and ready mind to do the work of the Lord, to labour in the Lord his vineyard, to do the work of an evangelist and of a minister; and such a one as in particular hath an earnest desire to procure their good unto whom he is sent, and will faithfully and diligently labour to present them over whom he is set pure and unblameable before God. For, first, his very office, which is to preach the gospel of Christ Jesus, should work in him a love and cheerful mind to teach the Lord his will, and to preach the gospel of Christ Jesus. Otherwise he is not meet to be commended to the work of the ministry, or at least not so meet as those that have a prompt mind to do the work of the Lord. And again, his love of that people unto which he is sent should make him faithfully to labour to gain them unto Christ, that they may be his crown and his joy in that day. Otherwise he is not meet to be set over that people, or at least not so meet as they that would faithfully labour to that purpose.

Again, the apostle his care to send such a man unto them, may be a good pattern to bishops and patrons of benefices, what manner of men to commend unto the work of the ministry, and to commit the charge of souls unto. In the like care and love of God's people, they should commend such men to this work and this charge, as we have already spoken of, men willing to do the work of the Lord, and which will faithfully care for their matters over whom they are set. Otherwise, to say the least, they shew themselves not to have that care and love of God's people which the apostle had of these Philippians; whereas their care should be the greater, because they command unto a continual charge, and Paul only sent Timothy to continue for a

season with the Philippians. But the speaking of these things in this place is to little purpose, therefore I briefly pass them over.

The third thing which I observed in these words was, how behoveful it was for the Philippians to receive such a man, sent in such love, with all gladness, and to make of such; for therefore (no doubt) did the apostle the rather command him so as hath been said, that so the rather they might receive him, and embrace his doctrine the more gladly, and be the more careful that he might not mislike anything amongst them when he should come amongst them. And this may teach you in what reverence you ought to have such men, when they are set over you in the Lord, even for the word's sake which they preach unto you. They faithfully care for your matters, not for your worldly matters, either in respect of you or of themselves; for they seek not yours, but you; but they faithfully care for your spiritual matters, even for the salvation of your souls; in Christ his stead they beseech you, and exhort you unto the things that belong unto your peace; they teach, they improve, they correct, they instruct you; and all is, that your souls may be saved in the day of Christ. Now they lead you forth beside the waters of comfort, now they bring you to feed in green pastures, now they call you back when ye are wandering out of the way, now they lead you on along in the way, now they wound and break the hairy scalp of him that goeth on in his wickedness, now they heal the bruised and afflicted soul, groaning under the weight and burden of his sin. These are such of your matters as they care for, and these they faithfully care for, if they be faithful ministers of Christ Jesus. In

what regard do ye think ye ought then to have them, even for their work's sake? 'Obey them that have the oversight of you,' saith the apostle, Heb. xiii. 17, 'and submit yourselves unto them: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give accounts, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.' And in another place, 1 Thes. v. 12, 'We beseech you,' saith the apostle, 'that ye know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, that ye have them in singular love for their work's sake.' By both which places ye see what reverence is to be given unto the faithful ministers of Christ Jesus. Now, as Samuel said unto Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 'Hath the Lord as great pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as when his voice is obeyed?' so I say unto you, Have we as great pleasure in any outward reverence that can be done unto our persons, as when the word of the Lord which we preach unto you is obeyed? No, my brethren, that is not the thing which we urge, albeit that also is by you to be regarded; but the principal mark which we shoot at is, that we may not run in vain, nor labour in vain amongst you, but that we may bring you to the obedience of the faith. We would have you to take heed unto the wholesome word of truth, which is able to make you wise unto salvation, and to esteem of it not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, as the word of God; for howsoever we be sinful and mortal men, of the same mould and metal with yourselves, that bring you this treasure, yet is it the word of life which we bring you. Oh let it dwell plentifully in you, that ye may abound in all knowledge and every good work, and love and honour them which faithfully care for your matters.

LECTURE XL.

For all seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son, &c.
PHILIP. II. 21, 22.

FOR all seek their own, &c. Touching the meaning of which words, it is first to be understood that the apostle doth not speak in this place generally of all men, but of such ministers of the gospel as were then at Rome with him. What then? Did all the ministers of the gospel that were then with him, Timothy only excepted, seek their own, and not that which was Jesus Christ's? No; the apostle, I take it, is not so to be understood, that he speaketh universally of all them, but because very many did so, therefore he saith all seek their own, &c.; even as we in our common phrase of speech are wont to say, that all the world is set upon covetousness, because so many run after riches, and all the world is set on mischief, because so many delight in wickedness. And this manner of speech is not unusual in the Scriptures. 'From the least to the greatest, every one is given to covetousness,' saith the prophet, Jer.

vi. 13, 'and from the prophet to the priest, all deal falsely;' where the prophet's meaning is, that very generally these faults reigned, and that very many had thus corrupted their ways, not that all universally were such without exception. And not to instance in more Scriptures, this we may often observe in the Scriptures, that in reproofs of sin all are accused if many have offended. When, therefore, the apostle here saith, 'All seek their own,' &c., his meaning is, that it was grown to be a very general fault amongst those ministers of the gospel that were with him, that very many of them sought their own, &c. Again, touching the fault noted in them, it is to be understood that the apostle's meaning is not, that they sought their own, but not that which was Jesus Christ's at all; for it is very likely that the apostle doth not here compare Timothy with those that had fallen from the faith, and turned aside after the world,

world, but with those that did sincerely preach the gospel of Christ, yet were further in love with the world than they should have been. The apostle's meaning, therefore, I take it, is, that many of those that were with him sought their own. Their own what? Their own ease, their own profit, their own honour, more than the glory of Christ Jesus. They did not simply not seek that which was Jesus Christ's, but they did not seek that so much as they did seek their own. They looked more unto their own ease, and pleasure, and profit, than they did unto those things which might be for the glory of Christ Jesus, and for the increase of his kingdom. For it is very likely that the apostle had dealt with the rest to go to Philippi, to see them, and to comfort them, and to confirm them in the faith, and finding them unwilling to undertake that journey in divers respects, he dealt with Timothy to that purpose, upon whose prompt mind theremunto above the rest, he giveth him this commendation above the rest. They, then, whom the apostle doth here note, ye see, are of those ministers of the gospel of Christ that were then with him. The thing which he noteth in them is, that they sought and regarded more the profit, and pleasure, and ease, and honour of themselves, than the glory of God, and the building up of the church of Christ Jesus.

Here, then, first, the apostle descrieth a notable fault in the ministers of Christ Jesus, which is, to seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's; to regard more their own ease, or pleasure, or profit, or honour, than the honour of God by preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus. A grievous fault in them that, both by integrity of life and uncorrupt doctrine, should draw others unto God, that they should seek anything rather or sooner than the honour of God; for as our Saviour saith, Mat. vi. 23, 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?' so I say, If they that should be principal lights in God's church, and by the light that is in them should bring others out of darkness into light, if they shall turn aside after the world, or prefer anything before the doing of their heavenly Father's business, how great and how grievous must needs their fault be! And yet, as grievous as the fault is, how faulty this way have the priests of the most high God in the old Testament, and the ministers of Christ Jesus in the New, been at all times? The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of the Lord, they so turned aside after the love of their bellies, and after the love of their pleasures, that they forgat, or else cared not for, the law of their God, 1 Sam. ii. And how often do the prophets complain of such shepherds as feed themselves, and not their flocks? In the new Testament the apostle noted it in John Mark, Acts xv. 38, that he departed from him and Barnabas from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work; in Demas, that he forsook him and embraced this pre-

sent world; and in this place he notes (it seems) many, that they sought their own, and not that which was Jesus Christ's. And if here this fault had stayed, the harm had been the less. But both always there have been, and still there are even to this our day, many tainted with this fault; for not to speak of those monsters of men, rather than ministers of Christ, that intrude themselves into this holy calling, not with any purpose to work in the Lord his vineyard, but only to feed upon the portion of the Levites, making of the ministry no more but a plain occupation, not to speak, I say, of these, because these are not worthy to live, of those that do sincerely preach the gospel of Christ Jesus, are there not many that do more seek their own than that which is Jesus Christ's? How many are there that do withdraw their shoulders from this burden as much and as often as they can, and take as little pains in this work as they can? And do not these seek their own ease more than that which is Jesus Christ's? Again, how many are there, whose minds being bewitched with the love of the world, are so carefully occupied about the things of this life, that they do not intend the work of their ministry as they should? And do not these seek their own profit more than that which is Jesus Christ's? Again, how many are there that preach themselves rather than Jesus Christ, seeking rather their own praise than that which is of God, and studying rather to speak unto the ear than unto the heart? And do not these seek their own credit and praise rather than that which is of Jesus Christ? Again, how many are there which preach Christ rather through strife and envy, than of good-will; rather in hope of preferment for their pains, than of desire to gain them that hear them unto Christ; rather for any other respect almost, than in any zeal of the glory of God? And do not all these seek their own rather than that which is Jesus Christ's? Well, it is a fault, and a grievous fault in the ministers of Christ Jesus, in any respect to prefer anything before the glory and increase of his kingdom, whose ministers they are, to seek either their own ease, or their own pleasure, or their own profit, or their own honour, or anything else rather or more than the building up of Christ his church in faith, and in love, and in every good work of the Spirit.

Now if this be a fault in them, hereby we are taught what duty is requisite in the ministers of Christ Jesus, namely, so to seek their own, as that first and principally they seek that which is Jesus Christ's. And what is that? That is the glory of Christ Jesus, the increase of his kingdom, the building up of his church unto a spiritual temple, the turning of many unto righteousness, the salvation of men's souls. This is that business which they must first and principally intend, and then such other things as may be furtherances, or at least no hindrances thereunto. Our calling and commission is to preach the gospel of

Christ Jesus; a woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel, and our apostle most straitly doth adjure us unto this duty, saying, 'I charge thee before God, and before the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. The work, then, of our ministry is the thing that we have to look unto; the thing wherein we must spend our strength and our study, is to do our heavenly Father's business, in begetting men unto the faith, and teaching them the way that leadeth unto salvation and life everlasting. We must not seek our own, but that which is Jesus Christ's. Our Saviour, when his mother Mary came and expostulated the matter with him why he stayed behind them in Jerusalem, 'Know ye not,' saith he, 'that I must go about my Father's business?' Luke ii. 44. Whereby he plainly teacheth us that the principal thing we are to regard is the principal end of our being and calling. So that this being our calling, and the thing whereunto we are set apart, to preach the gospel of God, we are by Christ his example to mind this above all things else whatsoever.

What then? Must a minister so wholly intend the work of his ministry as that he may not care for his family? Must he so wean himself from the affairs of this life as that he may not at all meddle with the things of this life? No, not so; he may, and ought to, care for his family, otherwise he is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8. And again the apostle, declaring in particular the office of a minister, saith, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, he must be 'one that can rule his own house honestly, having children in obedience with all honesty; for,' saith the apostle, 'if he cannot rule his own house, how shall he care for the church of God?' Out of which words ye may observe the clearing of two points, whereof the one is, that they may have house and family, wife and children, otherwise how should the apostle say that the minister must be such a one as, having children under obedience, can rule his own house honestly? The other is, that an honest and godly care over his own house, and the things that belong thereunto, is very requisite in the minister of Christ Jesus. All care, then, and all seeking of his own, all intermeddling with the things of this life, is not simply forbid the minister of Christ, but such only as doth withdraw him from that whereon his principal care should be set. He may seek his own, so that principally he seek that which is Jesus Christ's; for that is the fault here noted, that they seek their own more than that which is Jesus Christ's; and that is the duty here implied, that they ought first and principally to seek that which is Jesus Christ's, and then that which is their own. This, then, is generally to be concluded, that neither ease, nor pleasure, nor profit, nor honour, nor anything else, should withdraw them from the work of their ministry: neither in the work of their ministry should their eye be set upon anything, but only upon the glory of God, and the edification of the church of Christ Jesus; and

hereon should their zeal be so set, that they should be eaten up and consumed therewith.

The second thing which I note in these words, is touching the time when the apostle noted this fault in the ministers of Christ. It was a fault, and a general fault then, in the time of the apostles, in that golden age of the church, when they were immediately called by Christ Jesus, and put apart to preach the gospel of God, taught the ways of God most perfectly. Then, even those ministers which had been taught and instructed by the apostles themselves, those whom the apostles ceased not to put them in mind of their holy calling, and of the duties belonging thereto, even they sought their own more than that which was Jesus Christ's. They looked some after their ease, some after their profit, some after their pleasure, some after their honour, more than after the high price of their calling in Christ Jesus. Which note I do the rather observe in particular, because of those that are always complaining, as of all things in general, that they were never worse, so of the ministry in particular, that it was never worse than now it is. For as this is the humour of very many, always to mistake the present state the most, and to commend former times, though a great deal worse, yet a great deal more than the times wherein they live; so if once we come in talk of the ministry, oh, ministers, never worse, never more idle, never more covetous, never more ambitious than now they are! Yea, enter this discourse, and ye shall have many will never want matter, but the more they talk, the more they may of this argument. And I wish we were able to stop their mouths when they so willingly observe the general corruption in the ministry in our days; I wish we were able to say truly that simply they speak an untruth. But I cannot, neither is it my purpose to excuse the faults of our times in the ministry. Be it therefore true, which indeed is true, that very many of our coat and calling do more seek their own than that which is Jesus Christ's. Is this fault now more general in the ministers than ever it was? What! are ministers now more idle; do they now seek their own ease more than ever they did? Doth not the apostle in his day note John Mark for this fault? Acts xv. 38. Are they now more covetous; do they now seek their own wealth more than ever they did? Doth not the apostle in his day note Demas for this fault? 2 Tim. iv. 10. Are they more ambitious? Do they now seek after and love pre-eminence more than ever they did? Doth not the apostle John in his day note Diotrephes for this fault? 3 John 9. Oh, but if a note were now taken of those that are faulty these ways, not one, but very many, should be found faulty each of these ways. As though because the apostle noted no more, there were then no more. Nay, in that the apostle noteth these of these faults, we know that even then the ministers of Christ were tainted with these faults, but how generally we know not.

But tell me, ye that press this point so hard, that ministers are now worse than ever they were, say the most and the worst ye can, can ye say more or worse than this, that all seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's? And said not the apostle thus much in his day, as here we see? The apostle in his day meant it not universally in all; neither can ye say it at this day universally of all, that all seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's. Nay, if we shall speak unto the point, that which the truth is indeed, I am persuaded that never in any age the number of faithful ministers was greater than our age hath and doth afford; never more that with less self-respect, and more zeal to God's house, laboured in the work of their ministry than now there do. It may be that the graces of God's Holy Spirit were poured down in greater measure and abundance upon some in some times heretofore than now they are; and that the word hath been more powerful through a greater operation of the Holy Spirit in the mouths of some heretofore than now it is, as it was (no doubt) in the time of the apostles, with whom the Lord wrought most powerfully and wonderfully, and as haply it hath been in some since that time; yet, as I said before, I am persuaded that never in any time there were more, more inflamed with the zeal of God's Spirit, faithfully, painfully, and sincerely, without self-respects to labour in the work of their ministry, and to build up Christ his church in faith, and in love, and in every good work, than now they are. For if we should look into all succeeding times after the time of the apostles, especially if we should look into the times since the mystery of iniquity began to work in and under that man of sin, what else should we find but idleness, and covetousness, and licentiousness, and ambition, and what wickedness not? He hath lifted up himself on high, and 'hath exalted himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he doth sit as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,' 2 Thes. ii. 4. And what else doth his whole clergy seek, but the abetting of his pride, and the maintaining of his triple crown, together with such ease, and pleasure, and profit, as follows thereupon? So that if ever it were truly said of any that they sought their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's, then in my judgment may it as truly be said of them as of any. Thus then ye see that it is not the fault of our time alone, that now ministers seek their own more than that which is Jesus Christ's; but that even in the apostles' time it was so, as also that how general soever the fault now be, yet is it not more general than ever it was, but rather the number of them that seek that which is Jesus Christ's more than their own, is now greater than ever it was. Take heed therefore, men and brethren, lest at any time ye be deceived. The ministers of Christ they are as beacons on the top of an hill, in every man's eye, and every man's tongue talking of them; and what talk of

them more common than of branding them with some fault or other, thereby to discredit that truth which they preach? It is no new thing, ye see, that ministers have their faults, and he is the best that hath the fewest. And howsoever they tell you that ministers are now worse than ever they were, believe them not; for if the worst be said that can be, there cannot be worse than this, that all seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's; and thus much said the apostle in his time.

The third and last thing which I note from these words is, that howsoever properly, and in the meaning of the apostle, these words in this place be only affirmed of the ministers of Christ Jesus, yet may they truly be affirmed, even of all men in general, that all men for the most part do seek their own more than that which is Jesus Christ's, first looking unto the things of this life, and then afterwards unto the things that belong unto their peace in Christ Jesus. This is a point which needs not long to be stood upon, being so plain a truth in our own experience, that which way soever we cast our eyes, unto high or low, rich or poor, it cannot be denied. For look into the delights and desires of men, and see what it is that they principally hunt and seek after. Are there not many that are so ambitious that they seek by all means possible to be great, and to be had in honour of all men? And yet how many of them, remembering that 'promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south, but that God alone putteth down one, and setteth up another,' Ps. lxxv. 5, 6, do first seek the Lord and his strength, and do first honour him, that so he may honour them before all people? Nay, every plot is sooner and oftener cast than this, and this comes seldom or never within their thoughts, or if it do, yet this is too slow a course for them; God must give them leave to climb up another way, and then when they are where they would be, they will serve him perhaps when they think of him. Again, are there not many that are so covetous, that they seek by all means to be rich, and to be lords (if it were possible) of the whole earth? And yet how many of them, remembering that the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, do first seek the Lord, so to become rich by him? Nay, if fraud, oppression, usury, or the like, will make them rich, they will not wait upon the Lord, but thus they will become rich. Yea, but these, and such like, as seek and delight only in pleasures, and idleness, and riches, and honour, and the like, they seek these things altogether, they seek not the Lord at all, neither is God in all their thoughts; but thou seekest the Lord, and delightest in his law. And so do many which yet seek their own more than that which is Jesus Christ's. Wilt thou, then, see whether thine own things or the things of Christ Jesus be more sought of thee, whether in some things thou prefer not thyself before thy Christ and his will? Ask thine own heart, and see whether if thy God should

bid thee do as Zaccheus did, Luke xix. 8, give half of thy goods to the poor, and if thou hast taken from any man by forged cavillation, to restore him fourfold, whether (I say) it would not grieve thee so to do. See whether if Christ should say unto thee, as he said to the young man in the Gospel, Mat. xix. 21, ' Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me ;' whether (I say) thou couldst be content to do so. See whether in thy care for thy health, for thy wealth, for thy life, &c., thy first and chief care therein be that thereby thy God may be glorified. See (I say) and look into these and the like things with a straight eye, and this shall be a good rule for thee to know whether thou seek thine own more than Jesus Christ's. And howsoever you shall find yourselves in the examination of these things guilty or guiltless, this you know, that Christian duty requireth this of us, that first and principally we should seek the glory of God, and the things that belong unto our peace, and then afterwards the things that belong unto this life. We are careful for many things, what to eat, what to drink,

wherewith to be clothed, how to live and pay every man his own, how to provide for our wives and our children, how to maintain our state and calling, &c., and so we may, and so we ought to have a godly care of these things, without diffidence or distrust in God's gracious providence ; but the rule which our Saviour Christ giveth, Mat. vi. 33, that *man*st we still keep, ' first to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then all these things,' which are outward means of living and well living, ' shall be cast upon us.' Christ must be unto us health, and wealth, and life, and all things else. We must cast our care upon him, and he will care for us. Above all things we must submit ourselves unto his will, and walk after his law, and whatsoever things are needful and meet for us he will minister unto us. Let every man therefore so seek his own things, that first and principally he seek the things of God ; let him so mind earthly things, that his affections be principally set on the things that are above ; let him so regard his body, that he principally look unto his soul.

LECTURE XLI.

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.—PHILIP. II. 22-24.

NOW the apostle in these words, to clear Timothy of that fault wherewith very many of the rest were tainted, that he sought not his own more than that which was Jesus Christ's, he asketh no other or better proof thereof, than their own knowledge and experience of him, for that they knew very well that Timothy as a son with the father, served with the apostle the Lord Christ in preaching of his gospel.

But ye, saith the apostle, know the proof of him, &c. As if the apostle should have said, The rest that are with me, at least very many of them, seek their own more than that which is Jesus Christ's ; but for Timothy, yourselves will serve to clear him of this fault ; ye know upon that knowledge and proof which ye have of him, that he is another kind of man, that he hath served with me, even as a son with his father. Whom ? Christ Jesus. Wherin ? In the gospel ; that is, in the preaching of the gospel, his ministry is fully known unto you, that both he and I have walked after one rule in preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even that we have walked as the father and the son, in the self-same steps, unto the building of the spiritual temple of Christ Jesus, he walking as he hath me for example. This I take to be the apostle his meaning in these words. The notes hence to be observed, I will rather point at, than much stand upon, especially in this place and auditory.

1. Hence I note that Timothy, whom the apostle sent unto the Philippians, was a man of whom they had had proof and experience before, and whose faith-

fulness in the work of his ministry was so well known unto them, that they could not doubt thereof. And this was the cause why the apostle thought it not needful to labour much in the clearing of Timothy from such faults as had infected the rest, or in the enlarging of his commendation ; they knew that as a son with the father, so he had laboured with the apostle in preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus : a thing wherunto even all the ministers of Christ Jesus ought most earnestly to strive, by their faithful and careful walking in the works of their calling, to approve themselves, not only before the Lord, but also before men, to be the faithful servants of Christ Jesus. Yea, but here is all the skill to do so, or rather it seemeth a thing impossible to approve ourselves both before the Lord, and also before men ; for if we yet should please men, we were not the servants of Christ, Gal. i. 10. And therefore, the apostle in another place protesteth against pleasing of men, and saith : 1 Thes. ii. 4, ' we so speak, not as they that please men, but God which trieth our hearts.' How is it, then, possible for us to approve ourselves, both before God and before men ? True, it is a matter of no small difficulty. If we cry, Peace, peace, all is well ; if we sew cushions under their elbows, and speak fair and smoothing words ; if we suffer them to take their fill of pleasure, and to wallow in their wickedness, and either say nought unto them, or run with them : haply we may please men, but doubtless we shall not please God. Again, if we cry aloud, and lift up our voices like trumpets, and

tell the house of Jacob their sins, and the house of Israel their transgressions ; if we rouse them out of that dead sleep of sin whereinto they are fallen, and lay the axe to the root of sin, to cut it up by the roots ; if we pour vinegar into such wounds as sin hath made in their souls, and denounce the sharp threatenings of the law against them, haply we may approve ourselves unto the Lord, but doubtless we shall not approve ourselves unto men. Nay, what almost can we say or do whereby we shall be able to approve ourselves, both before the Lord and before men ? What then ? Are we to strive unto an impossibility ? Not so neither ; but this being out of doubt, that we ought to approve ourselves before the Lord, whose ministers we are, and whose name we bear before our people, we ought likewise so faithfully and carefully to walk in our calling before men, as that unto their consciences we may give certain proofs that we are the servants of Jesus Christ. We cannot always so approve ourselves unto men, as that what we say or do shall please them, neither do we or ought we to strive thereunto ; but we may and ought so to work the work of our ministry, and to do the duties of our calling, as that they ought to approve us, and may know that we are the servants of Jesus Christ, howsoever we come unto them, whether as the apostle saith, 'with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness,' 1 Cor. iv. 21. For whether we come with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness, whether we improve, or correct, or instruct, or exhort, or rebuke, our care and endeavour therein is to approve ourselves unto him whose ministers we are, and that we may be found faithful among you.

Now, as we ought thus to approve ourselves unto you, and by our faithful walking in our calling to give such proof of ourselves unto you that ye may know that indeed we serve the Lord in the gospel, so again ought ye to take heed of approving any who gives not plain proof that he serves the Lord in the gospel. They whom ye must approve, must be such as seek, not yours, but you ; such as first seek that which is the Lord Jesus Christ's, and then that which is their own ; such as ye know by your own proof that they serve their Lord Jesus Christ in preaching of his gospel, and not themselves or any else whomsoever. For from their lips ye shall receive knowledge and instruction, and by their mouth ye shall be taught in the ways of the Lord, and in the works of his commandments ; for they, serving the Lord Jesus from their hearts purely, out of the abundance of their hearts indite good matters, and their tongue is as the pen of a ready writer. Now, whether all of this congregation approve such, and none but such, yourselves can better tell than behoveth me to judge. But not to dissemble my fear, I am in fear, as the apostle saith, of some of you, that you more approve of such as serve that man of sin, in seducing by traditions, than of such as serve the Lord in the preaching of the gospel. The apostle, ye know, maketh mention of some bad ones, it is easy to guess who at

this day do most resemble them, which 'creep into houses, and lead captive simple women, laden with sins, and led with divers lusts,' &c., 2 Tim. iii. 6. And our Saviour likewise maketh mention of such as 'compass sea and land, to make one of their profession ; and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell than they themselves are,' Mat. xxiii. 15. I fear lest some of them have beguiled some of you, and seduced your foolish hearts, that ye should not hearken and obey the holy word of life, which only is able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. For how else cometh it to pass that some do so seldom present themselves in the holy place where they might hear the things that belong unto their peace ? And how else cometh it to pass that some, when the preacher begins, make an end of their devotion, and leaving the house of God, go to their own houses ? Have they any exception against us ? Do we teach for doctrines men's precepts ? Do we handle the word deceitfully ? Do we keep back any of God's counsel ? Nay, in all these things, as in the whole work of our ministry, we study to approve ourselves both before the Lord and before men. An exception they have, but almost they know not what. The truth is, they are not able to try the spirits whether they are of God, and therefore they approve them which prophesy lies unto them out of their own brain. But ye, beloved, learn to know and approve him who gives plain proof that he serves the Lord in the gospel, in the sincere and faithful preaching thereof.

Yea, but ye will say unto me, We would gladly approve them that serve the Lord in the gospel ; but how shall we know who serve the Lord in the gospel ? For they that are wholly devoted unto the service of that man of sin, and prophesy lies out of their own brain, will say that they serve the Lord in the gospel, as well as they will which sincerely preach the gospel of Christ Jesus unto the confnsion of that man of sin. Note, therefore, that the apostle in this place doth not simply say of Timothy that he served the Lord in the gospel, but that he served *with him* in the gospel ; wherein he giveth him this testimony, that he did sincerely teach Christ Jesns, preaching no other gospel than that which the apostle himself preached, but walking in the same steps with him unto the building of the spiritual temple of Christ Jesus, even as he had him for example. Will ye then know who they are that serve the Lord in the gospel ? Even they that serve the Lord in the gospel with Paul, they that preach no other gospel than Paul preached, they which ground the doctrines which they teach, not upon men's precepts, but upon the sure foundation of the prophets and apostles. Try, therefore, who they are that walk as they have the apostle for example ; see who they are that, after his example, testify the kingdom of God, and preach unto the people concerning Christ Jesus out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, Acts xxviii. 23. It is registered, ye know,

unto the great commendation of the men of Berea, that they searched the Scriptures daily, and sought whether the things which they heard of Paul and Silas were so, chap. xvii. 11. Observe the same rule ; search the Scriptures, for they testify of Christ and of his truth. It is our desire that ye would try by this rule both us, and them which teach otherwise than we teach, and then that ye would approve them whom by proof ye shall know to serve the Lord with Paul in the gospel. The rule which we have given whereby to know them that serve the Lord in the gospel, is most certain and sure, and it standeth you as well upon to approve them, and them alone, who give plain proof that they serve the Lord in the gospel, as it standeth us upon to labour by faithful walking in our calling to approve ourselves before the Lord and before men.

The next thing which I note out of these words is that which the apostle addeth by way of amplification, that Timothy served with Paul as a son with the father ; for the apostle doth not simply say, ye know the proof of him, that he hath served with me in the gospel, but, by way of amplification unto Timotheus's greater commendation, he addeth, that ' as a son with the father he had served with him,' &c. Whence I observe a notable example of that modesty and reverence which ought to be in particular in younger ministers towards them that are their ancients, and have gone before them in that work, and which ought to be in general in all the sons of God towards their elders, but especially towards those that have begotten them in the faith. Young Timothy serving with aged Paul in the gospel, even as a son with his father, should teach younger ministers to honour and to reverence their ancients in the ministry, and to walk as they have them for example, especially if they walk, as aged Paul did, faithfully and painfully in the works of their calling. Otherwise, if they delight in idleness, or mind earthly things, if they seek their own more than that which is Jesus Christ's, they are to be no more patterns unto us to follow than the examples of old Eli, or Demas, or the like. Nay, I think the younger may and ought, yet with all modesty, because of their years, to put them in mind of their duties, and to beseech them that, as fathers, they will go before them in all holiness of example, with incorrupt doctrine, with gravity, integrity, and with the wholesome word which cannot be reproved. But if they walk as aged Paul did, faithfully and painfully in the works of their calling, if in all holiness of example they walk before them as fathers before their children, if, as fathers, they have begotten them in the faith, then surely ought the younger ministers to honour and to reverence them, even as sons do their fathers, and as Timothy did honour Paul: a note worthy the urging and enlarging, if the place were as convenient for the urging of it, as the time requireth the urging of it. A son will not easily get himself up to the top of an

hill, thence to glance at such things as may turn to his father's shame, much less thence to cast dung in his face, and purposely to speak such things as justly may grieve him; least of all, upon an imagined error in his father, will he thence load him with blasphemies. A son, I say, will not thus do, and a minister should not thus do ; for he should serve the Lord with him in the gospel, as a son with the father.

Again, young Timothy used himself towards aged Paul as a son towards his father. A good lesson for those of younger years, to teach them in what regard they ought to have their elders and their betters ; they ought to honour and to reverence them, and to perform other duties unto them, in some sort as to their fathers. For so we see the Scripture would have them accounted as fathers, as where the admonition is, ' Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father,' and the elder women as mothers, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. And the fashion and custom of them is good, whose manner it is to salute elder men as fathers, and elder women as mothers. I do only point at this note by the way, because of the ill education of many of our youth, who regard not at all the gray hairs of the aged, but oftentimes most contumeliously do abuse them, calling them old fools, doating fools, and the like. Well, the precept is, Levit. xix. 32, ' Thou shalt rise up before the hoar head, and honour the person of the old man.' But this punishment is just with the Lord unto him that reverenceth not the person of the old man, that either he shall not come unto the honour of old age, or else his old age shall be without honour.

But an especial thing, which all of us hence should learn is, how we should walk in respect of them that have begot us in the faith of Christ Jesus. As Timothy regarded Paul, who had begot him in the faith, so must we regard those that have begot us in the faith ; even as a son carrieth himself towards his father, so should we carry ourselves towards them ; and therefore are they called our spiritual fathers in the Scriptures, and we their sons, if by their ministry they have begotten us in the faith. ' I beseech thee,' saith the apostle in the epistle to Philemon, ver. 10, ' for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds ;' where he calleth Onesimus his son. In the epistle to the Corinthians : 1 Cor. iv. 15, ' Though ye have,' saith the apostle, ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel ;' where he calleth himself their father, in the same respect that before he called Onesimus his son, even because he had begotten them in the faith. And in the epistle to the Galatians, iv. 19, ' My little children,' saith he, ' of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you ;' where he sheweth that he was a mother, and they as the sons of his womb. And wherefore is it that the ministers of Christ his gospel are thus called our fathers and mothers, as it were, and we their sons,

but to note unto us that we have our life in Christ Jesus through their ministry, and so to put us in mind of that duty which we owe unto them in respect of our regeneration and new birth by the immortal seed of God his word through their ministry? Look, then, what honour is due by children unto their parents, whether it be reverence, or obedience, or maintenance, or whatsoever else it be, the same we must account due by us unto our spiritual fathers in Christ Jesns. And therefore saith our Saviour Christ, Luke x. 16, ‘He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me.’ And the apostle, Heb. xiii. 17, ‘Obey them,’ saith he, ‘that have the oversight of you, and submit yourselves unto them; for they watch,’ saith he, ‘for your souls,’ &c. Again, saith the same apostle, 1 Tim. v. 17, ‘The elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, especially they which labour in the word and doctrine,’ &c. Let us therefore take heed how we do despise, or not reverence these our spiritual fathers in Christ Jesus; for if ‘the eye that mocketh his father, and despiseth the instruction of his mother, shall be a prey unto the ravens of the valley to pick it out, and unto the young eagles to eat it,’ Prov. xxx. 17, how much more shall it be so unto us, if we despise the instruction of our fathers in Christ Jesus, and if we ‘stop our ears at the voice of their charming, charm they never so wisely!’ Again, let us take heed how we do not obey those our spiritual fathers in Christ Jesus; for if ‘the stubborn and disobedient son, that will not hearken to the voice of his father, or of his mother, nor will obey their admonition, shall be stoned with stones unto the death,’ Deut. xxi. 18, how much more shall the judgments of God overtake us, if we will not hear, nor incline our ears to obey the voice of our fathers in Christ Jesus, if we will not hearken and obey their admonitions and exhortations, which in Christ his stead do beseech us, and admonish us, and exhort us. Hear the voice of wisdom, a voice fearful, yet most true, ‘because,’ saith Wisdom, Prov. i. 24, ‘I have called, and ye refused,’ &c. Even thus shall it be unto all them that obey not the voice of wisdom in the mouth of the minister. Harken, therefore, and obey; for obedience is better than sacrifice; yea, and reverence the person of the minister, for the word’s sake which he bringeth. In a word, from this one example of Timotheus’s commendation, let ministers of the younger sort learn to reverence their ancients in the ministry; let young men learn to honour the person of the aged, and let all of us learn to carry ourselves towards them that have begot us in the faith as sons unto their father.

Now followeth the conclusion of his first promise, which was to send Timotheus unto them, in these words, ‘Him, therefore, I hope,’ &c.; wherein is set down the repetition of the former promise, and likewise a farther signification of the time when he would send him. ‘Him,’ saith he, ‘I hope to send:’

there is the repetition of the former promise; ‘as soon as I know how it will go with me;’ here is the signification of the time when he would send him. Before he had said, ‘I trust to send Timotheus shortly unto you;’ now he sheweth what he meant by that *shortly*, that is, as soon as he should know whether he should be delivered from his bonds by Nero, which he hoped should be shortly. And the cause why he sent him not presently with Epaphroditus, was because as yet he knew not certainly how his matters would go; and he was very desirous that at his, Timotheus’s, coming unto them, they might be comforted over his deliverance from his bonds. I have already pointed out such notes as I thought meet to be gathered from this promise. It followeth:—

And I trust in the Lord. In these words he putteth them in the hope of his own coming shortly unto them; which his promise, as the other, dependeth upon the hope of his deliverance out of prison. This hope also of his coming unto them he putteth in for their farther comfort, and likewise for their farther confirmation in the faith. Whence, 1, we may note the apostle his great care that they might be comforted, and therein observe the great care that the ministers of Christ Jesus should have of the comfort of their people in the times of their distresses; of which note we have already spoken before. 2. We may note the apostle his great care that they might grow strong in the faith, and abound in every good work unto the glory of God the Father. And this care ought also to be in the ministers of Christ Jesus towards their people, as also I have heretofore observed; only here remaineth one doubt to be answered: for here some haply will ask, how it fell out with this hope and confidence of the apostle, was he deceived of his hope and confidence; or did he, as he hoped he should, send Timothy shortly after unto them; did he, as he trusted he should, come himself shortly unto them? Whereunto, 1, I answer, what if he were deceived of his hope and confidence? Doth this at all impair his credit and authority? If it had been a matter of faith and doctrine, it should; but this was a thing easual and contingent, wherein he might be deceived, and yet his credit no whit diminished; for albeit he had the Spirit of truth to lead him into all truth, in whatsoever doctrine he delivered unto the church, yet in things that concerned himself, especially in things future and contingent, might he be deceived; even as we see in this place, that albeit he had the gift of healing, yet Epaphroditus, whom he dearly loved, had like to have died with him. 2. I answer, that whether he were deceived of his hope and confidence or no, I cannot certainly tell, because it appeareth not by the Scriptures; but very well it might be that both he sent Timothy unto them, and that himself came afterwards unto them. For this we must know, that he was twice imprisoned at Rome by Nero: first, he was cast into prison in the third

year of Nero, and delivered in the fifth; again, he was cast into prison in the twelfth year of Nero, and was put to death in the thirteenth of his reign. Writing, therefore, this his epistle in his first imprisonment, it might very well be, that in seven or eight years between that and his second imprisonment, both he sent and went to Philippi; and the word which the apostle here useth (*πεποιησα*),^f maketh it very probable that both he sent and went thither, being a word which signifi-

fieh an assured confidence, and is seldom or never used but when the thing followeth, which thus is trusted. Howsoever he went, or went not, it is no matter of our faith, or whereabout we need to be troubled; this is sure, he trusted in the Lord to come unto them, and to see them, that so they might be comforted one in another, and that he might confirm and strengthen them in the faith. And let this be spoken touching his second promise.

LECTURE XLII.

But I supposed it necessary to send my brother Epaphroditus unto you, my companion in labour, and fellow-soldier,
etc.—PHILIP. II. 25, 26.

BUT I supposed it necessary. In this last part of this chapter, which concerneth Epaphroditus, the apostle, 1, signifieth his present sending of Epaphroditus back again unto them; 2, he setteth down the causes why he sent him now presently, and stayed him not till either Timothy or himself should come unto them, or till he should certainly know how his matters would go, whether he should be delivered out of prison or no; lastly, he prayeth them to receive him with gladness, and to make much of him, and such as he is. Touching Epaphroditus, it appeareth that he was the minister of the church at Philippi; one that so laboured in the work of his ministry, as that he approved himself very well, both unto the apostle and unto the whole church at Philippi. When the Philippians had heard that Paul was taken prisoner at Rome, they sent this their minister Epaphroditus to see him, and to carry him some relief from them, and there to abide with him, as it may seem, during his imprisonment, and to minister unto him such things as he needed; which trust of the church and duty unto Paul, whilst he faithfully and painfully discharged, he fell into a very great and grievous sickness, so that he was very near unto death, even at death's door, as we say. Yet such was the Lord his mercy towards him, neither towards him only, but likewise towards Paul, whom his sickness had very much affected, that he restored him unto health again. But when he heard that the Philippians had heard of his sickness, he grew full of heaviness, fearing lest these two things, both Paul's bonds and his sickness, should bring too much grief and sorrow unto the church. Being, therefore, desirous to return unto them, and again being very loath, and haply not well daring to go and leave Paul in prison, he was marvellously perplexed what to do, and grew full of sadness and heaviness; which when the apostle perceived, and understood that the Philippians were much moved at his sickness, he thought it necessary, both for his and their comfort, to send him presently unto them, as here he saith, 'I supposed it necessary,' &c. And this may serve for a general view of these words.

Now, for a more particular view of these words, see how the apostle, lest the Philippians should suspect that Epaphroditus had some way not approved himself unto him, because he sent him back before such time as he knew certainly how things would go with him, see, I say, what great titles he honoureth him withal, thereby to witness unto them what account he made of him, and of his service whiles he was with him. 1. He calleth him his brother, to wit, in Christ, begotten in one faith by one gospel unto one God, which is above all, and through all, and in us all. 2. He calleth him his companion in labour, as in divers placees he doth divers others who laboured with him in the preaching of the gospel of Christ Jesus, and in the building up of his body. 3. He calleth him his fellow-soldier, as also he doth Archippus, in the Epistle to Philemon, one that fought against spiritual wickedness, as he did, and did not only preach as he did, but also suffered troubles and endured manifold temptations as he did. 4. He calleth him their messenger, whom the whole church at Philippi sent unto him to visit him at Rome, where he lay in prison, for so the word *apostle* here used in the original is very well translated in our English Bibles. Lastly, he saith of him that he was one that ministered unto him such things as he wanted, which, I think, he saith both in respect of that relief which he brought unto Paul from the Philippians, and likewise in respect of that great use which he had of him all the while he was with him. Thus, then, ye see how the apostle, thinking it necessary to send Epaphroditus home unto them, for such causes as afterwards he mentioneth, sendeth him loaden with commendations, lest haply they should judge of him, at his return unto them, in any respect otherwise than were meet. Now, let us see what notes and observations we may gather hence for our use.

1. In the sending of Epaphroditus at this time unto the Philippians, I note the singular great care of the apostle over those whom he had begotten in the faith of Christ Jesus. He was now in prison, he knew not certainly when, or whether he should be

delivered out of prison or no ; and besides this, it seems that there were very few of the rest that were with him, save he only and Timothy, in whom the apostle did or could take any great comfort. For, as we heard a little before, all the rest that were with him, surely very many of them, sought their own, their own ease, their own pleasure, their own profit, their own honour, &c., not that which was Jesus Christ's, not that so much as they sought their own ease, or honour, or pleasure, or profit, or the like. Though, therefore, both Epaphroditus were desirous to go to them and they likewise desirous to see him, yet a man would have thought here had been sufficient matter of excuse, especially unto them who owed unto him, not their minister alone, but themselves also. Yet such was his love towards them, and such was his care of their comfort, that he preferred that before his own necessity, more regarding their good than his own need.

Now, what should this teach us ? Surely it should teach even all the ministers of Christ Jesus this lesson, so to tender their good and their comfort in Christ Jesus over whom the Lord hath made them overseers, as that they should more regard the things that belong unto their peace than the things that belong unto their own estate. Yea though they should be offered up upon the sacrifice of their faith, that is, though they should give up their lives for an offering unto the Lord for the confirmation and strengthening of their faith, yet should they therein even be glad and rejoice, so that they should not love their lives unto the death, if so their death might be for a saving health unto their people. To urge the necessity of this duty, or to complain of the neglect of this duty, though our times require it, yet this place is not so fit for it : And besides, everywhere almost our people can tell us of our duty, and can open their mouths wide to complain of our negligence in our duty. But if our care must be such for you, that we must care more for you than for ourselves, what do ye think should again be your care ? Surely ye should, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of God's word, your care should be, by our ministry, to grow up in the knowledge of his will, and in all obedience therunto, and this ye should more care for than for all the things of this life whatsoever. Yet, care we never so much for your saving health, labour we never so much to breed the love of God, and of his word, in you, so to gain you unto Christ : though we be altogether careless of our own matters, and only careful that ye may know Christ and him crucified, what sense or feeling of religion, what love of God or godliness, what longing or thirsting after the holy word of life, which is only able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, do we beget and engender in you ? Nay, every petty excuse shall serve for good enough to keep you from coming unto the courts of God's house, and presenting yourselves in the holy

place, where ye might hear the things that belong unto your peace. Some are too old to be taught even in the ways of God, though they know them not at all ; and some are so young that they may learn all betimes, so much as will serve their turn ; some have such business that they cannot come ; some are so forward and obstinate that they will not come ; some are so idle that they list not to come ; some can do as much good at home as if they came ; and some would come oftener than they do if they might have another preacher than they have. Thus this and that, and I know not what, stays us too, too much from washing ourselves in those waters whereby we might be cleansed from all leprosy of sin, and plainly shew that we care not for the things that belong unto our peace. Nay, where is there greater opposition in the people against their minister, and some things that they teach, than where the minister is most painful and careful that he may present his people holy unto the Lord ? And will ye know whence it is that so little care of growing up in the knowledge of God's will, and of walking in the ways of his commandments, is in the people, notwithstanding the never so great carefulness in the minister of Jesus Christ ? 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water,' but unless 'God do give the increase,' Paul's planting and Apollos's watering are not any thing, to no purpose at all. Semblably the ministers of Christ Jesus may, like good watchmen, stand upon their watch, and give warning from the Lord ; they may labour in all good conscience and with all carefulness to stir up their people unto a godly care of walking soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world ; but unless God do stir up this care in them by the power of his Holy Spirit, the minister spendeth his strength in vain, and for nothing, in respect of them. Hence, then, it is that there is so little care of growing up in the knowledge of God's will, and in all obedience therento, even because the people's hearts are not so softened and mollified by God's Holy Spirit that they should take care of the things that belong unto their peace, but lying still in the hardness of their hearts, they only mind earthly things, and set not their affections on the things that are above. Examine therefore yourselves, men and brethren, and see whether there be in you that care to grow up, by the ministry of the word, in all holiness and righteousness, which you persuade yourselves ought to be in the minister of Christ, that so ye may grow up. For if I should at large have discoursed of that care which ought to be in the minister towards you, which I only touched, I doubt not but ye would have easily assented thereto ; nay, ye think ye can discourse, at least ye will take upon you to discourse, largely enough of that point yourselves. See, then, whether there be in you such an ardent and an inflamed desire to grow up by the ministry of the word, as ye think there should be in the minister that ye may be profited by his minis-

try. If ye feel no such care and desire in you, it is because the Lord hath not as yet, by his powerful Spirit, wrought this holy care and desire in you. Strive, therefore, by prayer unto the Lord, for the grace of his Holy Spirit, whereby ye may be stirred up unto this care and desire, and frequent, with all diligence, places of holy and religious exercises, that so that weak and languishing desire which is in you, by the power of God's Spirit working with the word, may be raised and increased. As for you whose hearts the Lord hath inflamed with a godly care and desire that ye may grow up in all knowledge of God's will, and in all obedience thereunto, follow on hard toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; go on, from grace to grace, from strength to strength; and this I pray, as our apostle doth in the former chapter, Philip. i. 9-11, 'that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment,' &c. In a word, let those that are the ministers of Christ, and disposers of God's secrets, so tender their good over whom the Lord hath made them overseers, that they more regard the things that belong unto their peace, than the things that belong unto their own estate. And again, ye that hear the law of the Lord at their mouths, and are taught in the ways of your God by their ministry, so care to grow up by their ministry in the knowledge of God's will, and in all obedience thereunto, that ye care more for that than for all things else of this life whatsoever. And let this serve for our first note.

2. In this great commendation of Epaphroditus, and in these many titles wherewith the apostle honoureth him, I note the apostle his great modesty towards those that were called to be ministers of Christ Jesus, and walked with a straight foot unto the work of their ministration. Paul had many and most excellent prerogatives above him, yet doth he call him his brother in Christ. Paul was called immediately by Christ Jesus himself to be an apostle, and put apart by him to preach the gospel of God, and filled with gifts and graces above others to that purpose, and laboured more abundantly in preaching of the gospel of Christ than the rest; yet doth he call Epaphroditus his companion in labour, and in preaching of Christ his gospel. Paul was in stripes, in prison, in perils, in persecutions, and in death, more plentiful and more often than the rest of the apostles, yet doth he call Epaphroditus his fellow-soldier, and one that fought against spiritual wickednesses, and suffered many troubles, and endured manifold temptations as he did. In one word, he was every way far and incomparably above him, yet doth he make him one, as it were, and almost equal with himself, and highly honour the gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit in him, neither doth he account it any disparagement unto himself to do so.

Now, what should this teach us? Surely this should be a lesson unto all in general whom the Lord hath

any way advanced above their brethren, not to despise the meanest of their brethren; and, in particular, unto those of greater places in the ministry, that they should not extenuate and lessen the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in their inferior brethren, but that they should honour and much esteem of whatsoever good graces in them. First, therefore, in general, it is the rule of the apostle 'that no man should despise another, but that every man should make himself equal unto them of the lowest degree,' the high unto the low, the rich unto the poor, the wise and man of understanding unto the simple and ignorant. 'For what hast thou, O man, that thou hast not received?' Is thine honour and promotion great? 'Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south, but it is the Lord that putteth down one and setteth up another,' Ps. lxxv. 7, 8. Art thou increased in wealth and riches? 'The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich,' 1 Sam. ii. 7; prosperity and adversity, life and death, poverty and riches, even all these come of the Lord. Hast thou more wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding than others of thy brethren? 'The Lord only hath put wisdom in thy reins, the Lord only hath given thine heart understanding,' Job xxxviii. 38. Not to instance in more particulars, that of James, in general, is most true, chap. i. 17, 'Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadowing by turning.' Now, wherefore hath he made thee great and mighty? that thou mightest tyrannise over and oppress thy brother? Wherefore hath he made thee rich and wealthy? that thou mightest grind the faces of the poor, and lift up thyself in pride above them? Wherefore hath he made thee wise, and of an understanding heart? that thou mightest disdain and laugh at the simplicity and rudeness of thine inferior brother? Nay, whatsoever blessing it is that thou hast, it is conferred upon thee for the honour and glory of thy God, and for the good and comfort of thy brother. 'Ye shall have the poor always with you,' saith our Saviour Christ, Mat. xxvi. 11; and in Deuteronomy the Lord saith, chap. xv. 11, 'there shall be ever some poor in the land; therefore, saith the Lord, thou shalt open thine hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor in the land.' It is, then, that thou mayest do good unto thy poor brother, that God hath made thee rich and wealthy; it is that thou mayest instruct, and that thou mayest advise thy brother in what he standeth in need of thee, that he hath made thee wise and learned; it is that thou mayest strengthen and lift thy poor brother out of the mire, that God hath made thee great and mighty. I wish our great and mighty men of the world, that still climb and never think themselves high enough; I wish our rich and wealthy worldlings, that make no end of gathering riches and increasing their substance; I wish our wise and great learned

men, whose knowledge puffeth them up more than is meet, would consider these things, and lay them up in their hearts and practise them in their lives. But do they not rather glory in these things, as though they had not received them, or at least knew not for what end they had received them? When they are become as great as Haman, do they not prove like unto Haman, even such as think of nothing but of oppressing, and undoing, and murdering the people of God? When they are become as rich as Nabal, do they not prove as churlish and as ill-conditioned as Nabal, even such as will part with nothing for the relieving of the necessities of the poor saints of God? When they are become as wise as Ahithophel, do they not prove like unto Ahithophel, even such as use their wisdom and counsel unto the utter ruin of God's children, and desolation of his inheritance? The world seeth, and let the world judge whether it be so or no. As for us, men and brethren, let us know that 'the wise man is not to glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches; but he that rejoiceth is to rejoice in the Lord,' who giveth him wisdom, and honour, and strength, and riches, and all things plenteously. Neither is he for these things, or any things of like sort, to advance himself above his brethren, as though he were the man unto whom all men should bow, and on whom all men's eyes should be set; but he is so to use these things to God's glory, and to the good and comfort of his brethren, and to make himself equal unto them of the lowest degree. This, I say, let us know, and let our knowledge break forth into all holy practice, that so we may live without pride, and disdain, and contempt one of another, submitting yourselves one unto another, every man esteeming other better than himself, and communicating the things wherewithal God hath blessed us, whether wisdom, or knowledge, or riches, or what else soever, to the good one of another, with all cheerfulness, and in all singleness of heart. And let this be spoken touching that which in general all men who are any way advanced above their brethren may learn from this great mildness of the apostle, in equalling Epaphroditus almost with himself, and magnifying the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in

him, notwithstanding that he was far inferior unto the apostle.

2. From this same example they in particular that are of greater places in the ministry may learn a good lesson, which is not to extenuate and lessen the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in their inferior brethren, but to honour and esteem whatsoever graces of God in them, though far meaner than those in themselves. For are they not worthily reproved, which say, as it is in Isaiah, chap. lxxv. 5, 'Stand apart, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou'? And are they not as worthily to be reproved, who, because of their places and gifts above their brethren, carry themselves insolently towards their brethren, and instead of countenancing and gracing them, do vilify and disgrace them, notwithstanding the good gifts and graces of God in them? Who greater in the church than Paul was? and whose gifts greater than were his? If he, then, so countenanced those who were his inferiors much in the ministry that he called them his brethren, his companions in labour, his fellow-soldiers, if he, for such gifts and graces of God's Spirit as he saw in them, though far inferior unto his own, yet loved and honoured them for them, why should it not be thought a thing most beseemingly them who are of eminent gifts and place in the church herein to follow the holy example of the blessed apostle? Why should not they use those that are their inferiors in the ministry as their brethren, as their companions in labour, as their fellow-soldiers? Why should not they grace, and encourage, and stir up God's graces in their inferiors? Humbleness, and meekness, and brotherly kindness much beseemeth all the children of God one towards another, but most of all the ministers of Christ Jesus, one towards another. And if, in whomsoever they be, the gifts and graces of God are by all men to be acknowledged and to be honoured, then surely especially in the ministers, by them that are ministers of Jesus Christ with them, howsoever in place they be above them. This point might be much enlarged, and what the practice is might be observed, and most worthily reproved, if this place were as fit for the urging as the time requireth the urging of this point. But my especial desire and purpose is in this place to insist and stand upon such things as may be most for your use.

LECTURE XLIII.

For he longed after all you, and was full of heaviness, because ye heard that he had been sick.—PHILIP. II. 26.

IT remaineth now that we proceed unto the causes why the apostle sent Epaphroditus now presently unto the Philippians, if first we shall observe one or two notes, from one or two of those titles wherewithal the apostle honoureth him in the 25th verse.

Amongst those titles wherewithal the apostle honoureth Epaphroditus, ye see how he calleth him his 'com-

panion in labour.' In labour? In what labour? In the preaching of the gospel of Christ Jesus, and in the building up of his body by the work of his ministry. What then? Is preaching of the gospel of God such a labour? Is the work of the ministry, and the teaching of the people in the ways of God, such a matter that it is to be counted or called a labour? Surely

no; in many men's account it is not. An easy matter, and no labour at all, for a minister to speak an hour unto his people. What pains can this take him? What toil can be in this work? No more but turn the cock, and the water gushes out. He is either worth little, or else too, too dainty, that will not come at every call unto the people to preach to them. Thus many account this work little or no labour. Well, is running in a race where there is striving for the mastery, or for the winning of the prize, or of the crown that they run for, is this any labour? They in those countries where this running is much used can tell that it is a labour. And how often doth the Holy Ghost compare the work of the ministry unto this running in a race! To go no farther for proof, we heard and spake of this comparison in the 16th verse of this chapter, where the apostle exhorted them unto their duties both towards God and men, 'that he might rejoice in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.' That he had not run nor laboured in vain: what is that? That is, that his preaching amongst them had not been in vain unto them. Again, is the work of the husbandman, whose work hath [no] end, but is continually either dunging, or tilling, or reaping, or gathering in the fruits of his ground, or hedging, or ditching, or the like, is this any labour? The husbandman knoweth, and we can easily imagine that it is a labour. And doth not the Holy Ghost sometimes call the ministers of the gospel God's husbandmen, and you that hear, God's husbandry, and oftentimes compare them unto husbandmen? 'We together,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 9, 'are as God's labourers, and ye are God's husbandry, and God's building;' where it appeareth by the antithesis between the minister and the people, that the minister is called God's labourer, that is, God's husbandman, even as the people are called God's husbandry. And in the latter epistle to Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 6, the minister is plainly compared unto an husbandman, whose portion it is to labour before he receive the fruits. Again, is the work wherein men, through painfulness and earnestness, do even weary themselves, is it any labour? If any be, then certainly that is. And doth not the Holy Ghost so speak of the minister's work as of a work wherein they even weary themselves with hard labour? 'We beseech you,' saith the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 12, 'that ye know them which labour among you (*τως κοπιῶντας*), and are over you in the Lord;' which labour, that is, which painfully and earnestly labour amongst you till they be weary. But what need more proofs for this point? The minister that will speak plainly to the understanding of his people, that will speak soundly unto the heart of his people, that will speak in the evidence of the Spirit unto his people, that cares what and to what purpose he speak unto his people, must certainly labour both for speaking plainly and soundly, and in the evidence of the Spirit, and for speaking to good purpose. Nay,

what part is there of his ministry which is not full of labour? To pluck up, to root out, to throw down, to build, and to plant, all works of the minister, Jer. i., all great works, and all works full of labour. So that whatsoever account men make of the work of the ministry, and of the preaching of the gospel of Christ Jesus, it is a work full of labour, no less painful to the mind than is the work of the husbandman or artificer to the body, and consequently the apostle well called Epaphroditus his companion in labour, even in a painful labour, in preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus.

This should teach the people over whom the Lord hath made them overseers, willingly to yield unto them whatsoever duty by the law of God or man belongeth unto them, whether it be of maintenance for their livelihood or of reverence unto their persons. And, first, for their maintenance, it is the apostle his disputation in the former to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. ix. 11, that those which sow unto others spiritual things, should reap their carnal things: 'If we have sown unto you spiritual things,' saith the apostle, 'is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things? Do ye not know, that they which minister about the holy things eat of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?' 'So also,' saith the apostle by way of application, ver. 14, 'hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' For as the apostle had said before, ver. 7, 'Who goeth a warfare any time at his own cost? or who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?' as if he should have said, No man doth so. The reason whereof he bringeth out of the law of Moses: 'For it is written (saith he) in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn;' in which whole disputation, that being presupposed and taken as granted which I have proved, namely, that the work of the ministry is no idle speculation, but a painful and hard labour, ye see how the apostle inferreth thereupon, as I now do, being taught by him, that seeing the ministers of the gospel do labour and watch for our souls as they that must give account unto God for them, therefore we should give unto them that portion which is due unto them for their maintenance, and this we should do with all cheerfulness, as unto the Lord. Now, how this duty towards them is everywhere almost neglected, they that live abroad see and know too well; for so it is, that every little is now too much for the minister. If he may have some reasonable portion of that whole which is due unto him, it is thought that he is very well used; if anything of his due may be concealed and kept from him, it is thought to be very well saved, and better so saved than ill spent; for so commonly they account of that which they give unto the minister, albeit it be not theirs, but his, which they give. Far otherwise, then, it was in the times of greatest ignorance and blindest

superstition, for then they thought they could not give enough unto their massing priest, and now they think they cannot pull enough away from the teaching minister; then they thought every penny better bestowed than other upon their confessor, now they think every penny worse bestowed than another upon their pastor. But it is no new thing to see blind devotion sometimes to carry men further than doth sound and sincere religion. How ready were the people of Israel to pluck off the golden earrings from their ears to give them unto Aaron to make a molten calf withal! Exod. xxxii. 3. How liberal was Micah unto the Levite, to get him to stay with him, to be unto him a father and a priest! Judges xvii. 10. And so it falleth out very often, that in time of darkness and ignorance men are more inflamed towards the church and pastors thereof, with a blind zeal, than with a true zeal in the clear light of the gospel. Well, let us know that we are to give unto them that labour amongst us, and watch over our souls, that which is due unto them, whether it be of maintenance for their livelihood, or of reverence unto their persons. And for conclusion of this point, let that one place of the apostle serve for both these purposes, where he saith that those elders especially which labour in the word and doctrine are worthy of double honour, 1 Tim. v. 17, which is, as divers do expound it, of maintenance for their life, and of reverence unto their persons. They are God's labourers, both labouring for God and to bring us unto God. Let us therefore carry ourselves towards them as towards God's vicegerents upon earth, giving unto them with all cheerfulness that which is due unto them, as unto the Lord. And let this suffice touching this, that Paul calleth Epaphroditus his companion in labour.

Again, he calleth him his fellow-soldier. What then? Paul or Epaphroditus, were they soldiers? went they forth to battle? were not the Levites, and are not the ministers of the gospel of Christ Jesus, exempted from service in war? Is the minister to labour like an husbandman, and besides also to fight as a soldier? Yea, certainly, Paul and Epaphroditus were fellow-soldiers; neither are any of the ministers of Christ exempted from war, but fight they must, and soldiers they must be; but neither are their weapons carnal wherewithal they must fight, neither are the enemies against which they must fight so much flesh and blood, as spiritual wickednesses, and the princes of the darkness of this world. They are soldiers, to fight with the sword of the Spirit against every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. In this, then, that the apostle calleth Epaphroditus his fellow-soldier, we are put in mind, as of the state of all Christians in general, so of the ministers of the gospel in particular, namely, that the life of all Christians in general, and of the ministers of the gospel in particular, is nothing else but a con-

tinual warfare, wherein we must still play the soldiers, and still fight. We look for a city where there shall be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, neither any enemies to fight withal, where we shall triumph over every enemy that hath exalted himself against us, and where we shall reign and ever be with the Lord in the kingdom of Christ Jesus for ever and ever. But whiles we are members of the militant church here upon earth, no man better or worse, rich or poor, may promise rest unto himself, but all must stand upon their guard, and all must always be in a readiness to fight. Whereupon Job calleth the life of man a warfare, chap. vii. 1, because together with his life his warfare shall only have an end. And our Saviour telleth us, that 'the day hath enough with his own grief,' Mat. vi. 34, that is, never a day of a man's life which brings not grief enough with it upon its own back. Now, the enemies which we have to fight withal are the world without us, the flesh within us, and the devil seeking continually like a roaring lion to devour us; none of all which want either will, or skill, or might to overthrow us, unless we hold fast the rejoicing of our hope unto the end. The flesh hath so many sugared baits and deceitful delights to allure men unto the enticements thereof, that sometimes Davids, and Solomons, and men after God's own heart, cannot avoid the snares thereof, but are entangled therewith. The world likewise hath so many ways to deceive, as that even the disciples of Christ Jesus cannot avoid it, but be deceived thereby. And the devil so furiously rageth, as that the Son of God, Christ Jesus himself, cannot avoid his manifold temptations. These are those enemies which we have all of us to fight withal, and these we shall have to fight withal so long as we live in this flesh; and whatsoever battery any of these, or all these, can lay against our souls, we shall be sure of it whiles we live in this world; for the flesh evermore 'rebelleth against the spirit,' and ever 'striveth to lead us captive unto the law of sin which is in our members,' Rom. vii. 23. The world likewise knoweth not the Lord, Job xvii. 25, but 'the amity of the world is the enmity of God,' James iv. 4; and 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,' 1 John ii. 15. The devil likewise seeketh continually, like a roaring lion, whom he may devour, 1 Peter v. 8. Nothing to rid any of us from the assaults of all these till death, and therefore all of us must be soldiers and fight against all these, as in our baptism all of us have promised, so long as we carry about with us our earthly house of this tabernacle.

And as this is the state of all Christians in general, to live in continual fight against their spiritual enemies, so the minister in particular hath a chief part in this fight. I will not stand to enlarge this point. The devil knoweth that if the shepherd can be turned out of the way, his sheep will quickly be scattered; and if he can make the angel of the church of the Laodi-

ceans to be neither hot nor cold, he will quickly bring the church unto his bent. And therefore he bends his full force against them, arming both the flesh, and the world, and himself against them, to see if he can overthrow them, even as he did against Christ, desirous to break the head, whereas his power was limited only to bruise the heel.

Now what should this teach us? Surely, first, it should teach us this lesson, that since we have such enemies continually to deal withal, therefore we should put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to resist in the evil day, and having finished all things, stand fast; for so the apostle teacheth us in the last to the Ephesians, where, having set down what enemies we have to wrestle against, as against principalities, against powers, &c., 'For this cause,' saith he, 'take unto you the whole armour of God,' &c., Eph. vi. 12. Yea, but what is this armour of God, which may serve as the best armour of proof against these mighty enemies which we have to wrestle and encounter withal? The apostle setteth it down in the same place. The girdle wherewithal our loins must be girded, must be verity and integrity of doctrine; our breastplate, which we must have on our breast for the defence thereof, must be righteousness and holiness of life; the shoes, wherewithal our feet must be shod, must be the preparation of the gospel of peace, even a prompt and ready mind to confess and embrace the gospel of peace; the shield wherewithal we may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, must be faith, which (as John saith) is 'the victory whereby we overcome the world,' 1 John v. 4; our helmet for our head must be the hope of salvation purchased by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ Jesus; our sword wherewithal to wound our enemy must be the word of God; and prayer and supplication in the Spirit is also a necessary part of our armour, if we will be so thoroughly armed that we will be without all gun-shot, as they say. This is that armour which the apostle prescribeth us, both to defend ourselves and to offend our enemies withal; and this armour if we put on, we shall be able to stand against all the assaults of the devil, for here is armour for the whole body, from the head to the foot, unless we will turn our back upon our enemy.

Now consider this, men and brethren, and lay it unto your hearts. Ye cannot but see by this which hath been spoken, that ye have great enemies every one of you to encounter withal; ye cannot but see that the whole armour of God is necessary for you if ye will be safe from your enemies. If either ye want your helmet and headpiece, which is the hope of salvation by Jesus Christ; or if ye want your breastplate, which is righteousness and innocency of life; or if ye want the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of life; or if ye want the girdle of your loins, which is verity and soundness in religion; or if ye want your shoes, which is a mind prepared and ready to embrace the gospel of peace; or if, besides all these things, ye be

fainting and failing in prayer and supplication in the Spirit: if such parts as these are wanting, one or more, ye are disarmed, and lie open unto every stroke of that enemy which woundeth deadly, and every of whose venues are as so many stings of death. It is the apostle James his advice, chap. iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he will fly from you.' Would ye, then, have your great enemy the devil to fly from you? Ye must not turn your back and fly from him; for having no armour, as even now I told you, for your back parts, if you fly he follows, and strikes and wounds deadly, because there is no armour to keep back the force of his stroke. If ye will put him to flight, ye must stand to him, and resist him. Now your resistance must be by putting on this armour of God; and if the whole armour be not put on, the enemy quickly espies his advantage, and there assaults where any part of the armour wants. Now will ye know whether to come for this armour of God, and where to have it? Come to the word of God, and the gospel of peace; there shall ye have it, and there shall ye learn so to put it on, that the enemy would be never so fain, yet shall not be able to hurt you. This is that word, unto the reverent hearing and embracing whereof I do often exhort you, neither can I ever too much exhort you. And now again I tell you, that if ye will stand fast in the evil day, if ye will be safe from such enemies as wound the soul deadly, if ye will, as good soldiers, so fight that ye will never fly, then must ye let the word of the Lord dwell in you plentifully; for so, and so only, ye shall be mighty, through God, to cast down holds, and everything that exalteth itself against God, whether it be the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, or whatsoever other thing else of the world it be.

The second lesson which this should teach us is, that if our whole life be nothing else but a continual warfare against such mortal enemies, then should we desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, rather than to continue still in such a vale of misery, where there is continual fighting. After a sore and sharp fight at sea, or at land, continued by the space of seven or eight hours, or haply a whole day together, would we blame them if then they did desire rest? or rather, would we not marvel at them if then they should not desire rest? Now the fight which we maintain against our spiritual enemies is not only for the space of certain hours or days, but for days and nights, even for the whole term and course of our life. Should it not, then, seem a thing marvellous and strange, that we should not desire peace, and to have our warfare at an end? Yet who is he that is not loath to lay down his house of clay? Who is he almost, that when death knocks at his door, would not live a little longer if he might? Yet let me not here be mistaken, for I do not say this as if I liked of this, that men should desire to be loosed from the bonds of this life before the time appointed of the Lord come. Nay, let the

children of God submit themselves unto his will, who will dislodge them when it seemeth best to his godly wisdom ; and in the mean time let them this know, and therein comfort themselves, that howsoever their fight be long and great, yet that the Lord hath so done with their enemies, as Judah dealt with Adonibezek, Judges i. 6, even cut off the thumbs of their hands and feet, that is, so abated their power, and broken their strength, that though they continually assault them, yet can they never prevail against them. This therefore I do not say as if I liked that any should desire to die before his time appointed of the Lord come, but rather to lesson us in this, that when our glass is run, and our time appointed of the Lord come, we should not then be unwilling to lay down our lives, but rather be then glad and rejoice that our warfare is at an end, and that we shall be joined with our head Christ Jesus. A man would think we should greatly desire to be delivered from these miseries whereunto this life is subject, rather to triumph over our enemies than to live still at the stave's-end with them ; rather to reign with Christ in the valley of blessing, where there is peace, and joy, and life for evermore, than to fight under Christ in the valley of tears, where he shall bear away many strokes, though not any deadly wounds, because his life is hid with Christ in God. What, then, should be the cause why we should not most willingly lay down our lives in the time of death ? Surely, in my judgment, it is because in the time of our health we mind too much earthly things, and set our affections too little on the things that are above. For if in the time of our health our conversation were in heaven, as it should be, we would most patiently and willingly look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall 'change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body ;' and when death approached, we should cry with the apostle, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly !' To conclude this point ; therefore, when our time appointed of the Lord comes, let us willingly lay down our lives, and let us be glad and rejoice that our warfare is at an end. And to the end that in the time of death we may do so, let our conversation in the mean time, in the time of health, be in heaven ; let us set our affections on the things that are above, and not on the things which are on the earth.

For he longed after all you, &c. In these words the apostle setteth down the cause why he now presently sent Epaphroditus unto the Philippians, and did not stay him till either Timothy or himself should come unto them. The cause was (as appeareth by the apostle) because Epaphroditus greatly longed, it is not said after his own people, and them of his own family, but because he longed after the church at Philippi ; neither so only, but after all the church at Philippi ; neither did he only long after them all, but so he longed that he was full of heaviness till he might come unto them. And why did he so long after them

that he was full of heaviness till he might come unto them ? The apostle saith, because the Philippians had heard of his sickness. Epaphroditus then longed after all the church at Philippi, and was full of heaviness till he might come unto them, and therefore the apostle sent him presently unto them ; and again, Epaphroditus knew that the Philippians had heard of his sickness, and therefore he longed after them all, and was full of heaviness till he might come unto them. To knit up, then, both the causes in one, and to gather the sum of all, the cause why the apostle sent Epaphroditus now presently unto them, was because Epaphroditus, having heard that the Philippians knew of his sickness, longed greatly after them all, and was full of heaviness till he might come unto them, and comfort them over his sickness, lest they should be swallowed up of too much grief for both Paul's bands, and his sickness.

Here, then, I note what mutual love and affection there should be between the pastor and his people, even the like that was between Epaphroditus and his people of Philippi. The pastor his sickness or sorrow whatsoever, should be the people's sorrow and heaviness of heart ; and again, the people's trouble of mind or affliction of body should be the pastor's anguish of soul and vexation of spirit. So it was between Epaphroditus and his church at Philippi, as here we see ; and so it was between Paul and all the churches, at least on his part, as himself witnesseth, saying, that such was his care of all the churches, that 'if any were weak, he was also weak ; and if any were offended, he also burned,' 2 Cor. xi. 29. And I wish I could truly instance in the like affection between many pastors and their people in this our day. But such examples are not everywhere with us ; nay, in too many places with us the pastor cares not, if he may have their fleece, though he never see or hear of his people and flock ; and again, in too many places the people care not, if they may have their forth in their own delights and desires, though they never see or hear of their pastor. Yea, so far are they from this sympathy and mutual love and affection, one towards another, that so the one may have his profit, and the other their pleasure, they are not much touched with any further respect either of other. Well, it should not be so, but the joy of the one should be the joy of the other, and the grief of the one should be the grief of the other.

Now, here haply it may be demanded, why either Epaphroditus or the Philippians should be so full of heaviness, and take the matter so much to heart, seeing his sickness, which was the cause of all this heaviness, came unto him by the will of God and his gracious providence. Whereunto, in one word I answer, that this mutual heaviness, one for another, was only an argument of their mutual love, one of another, not any argument of their ignorance or doubt of God's providence in his sickness. Our Saviour

Christ, as we read, John xi. 33, ‘groaned in the spirit,’ and was troubled in himself, and wept for the death of Lazarus. This shewed his great love of Lazarus, as the Jews very well gathered, saying, ver. 36, ‘Behold how he loved him;’ but will any man gather hence that he knew not or doubted of God’s providence in his death? Nay, himself plainly said, in the beginning of that chapter, that ‘that sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.’ So that albeit he knew that his death was by God’s providence, God so providing that his Son might thereby be glorified, yet such was his love towards him that he wept, and was much troubled for him. Well, then, Epaphroditus and the Philippians might be full of heaviness, each for

other, in regard of that love and tender affection which they had each to other, and yet might they well both acknowledge the providence of God in his sickness, which was the cause of heaviness, each in other. To the point in general, in one word I say, that in that love which we bear, and ought to bear, one towards another, we may be sorry, one for the things that befall unto another, albeit we know certainly of the providence of Almighty God therein; yet so in love, one towards another, we must be sorrowful, one for another, that our faith in God’s providence must stint our sorrow that it be not exceeding sorrowful, because we know that all things work for the best for God’s children.

LECTURE XLIV.

And no doubt he was sick very near unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, &c.—

PHILIP. II. 27.

AND no doubt he was sick, &c. In these words the holy apostle, 1, confirmeth that report which the Philippians had heard touching their minister’s sickness, that it was no vain or false report, but a very true report; and, secondly, he signifieth his recovery, and restoring unto health. That the report which they had heard was true, the apostle doth assure them, first affirming his sickness, ‘and no doubt he was sick,’ and then the extremity of his sickness, ‘very near unto death.’ In the signification of his recovery and restoring unto health, which is in the next words, the apostle, 1, setteth down the cause of his recovery, which was God’s mercy, ‘but God had mercy on him;’ 2, the extent of God’s mercy herein, which was not to Epaphroditus alone, but to Paul also, and ‘not on him only, but on me also’; 3, the cause why the Lord, in mercy to Paul, also restored him unto health, to wit, ‘lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow,’ i. e. lest his sorrow which he had by his own bonds and imprisonment should be increased by the death of Epaphroditus their minister, ‘lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.’ The words need no farther opening or explicating, being in themselves easy enough to be understood. Let us, therefore, now see what notes and observations we may gather hence, wherof we may make some use unto ourselves.

1. Here we see that Epaphroditus, a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, a painful minister of the church, one whom the holy apostle made that reckoning of that he called him his brother, his companion in labour, his fellow-soldier, was sick, and that very sore sick. Whence I gather this observation, that the children of God, and most faithful servants of Jesus Christ, are subject, as unto many miseries, and troubles, and infirmities of this life, so unto sickness and diseases of the body. How faithful a servant of Jesus Christ

Timothy was, ye heard a little before, upon occasion of the apostle his promise to send him unto the Philippians, ver. 19. And how subject he was unto sickness, may appear by that advice which the apostle giveth unto him in his former epistle unto him, chap. v. 23, where he adviseth him to ‘drink no longer water, but to use a little wine for his stomach’s sake, and for his often infirmities.’ Of Epaphroditus his sickness, likewise, ye see how plain testimony the apostle giveth in this place. Nay, what child of God freed or exempted from bearing of this cross, and drinking of this cup? What shall we say then? Are not sicknesses and diseases of the body, the rod of God’s wrath, wherewithal he doth punish the sin and rebellion of the wicked? Or doth the Lord lay the rod of his wrath, wherewith he punishment the wicked, upon his own children and faithful servants? True it is, that sickness and diseases of the body are the rod of God’s wrath, wherewith he punishment the disobedience and rebellion of the wicked, as the Scriptures plainly prove unto us. Let that one place in Deuteronomy serve for all the rest, where the Lord, having made great promises of blessings unto them that obey his commandments, chap. xxviii. 2, 3, afterward threateneth curses and plagues unto them that will not obey his voice, and keep his commandments, ver. 15. And amongst other of those plagues which the Lord would bring upon them, it is said, ver. 22, ‘The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with the fever, and with a burning ague, and with a fervent heat,’ &c.; where ye see plainly that consumptions, and fevers, and hot burning agues, and such like diseases, are reckoned among those plagues and rods of his wrath wherewith he punishment the sins of that land, or that country, or that town, or that people whatsoever, that will not hearken unto his voice nor obey his commandments. And may we not justly

fear that the Lord hath taken this rod into his hand, and already begun to punish us therewith? Look unto the disobedience, and rebellion, and neglect of walking in the ways of God's commandments that is generally amongst us, and see whether we have not given him cause to take this rod, and to punish us therewith? Again, look unto such hot agues, unto such sharp, and strange, and pestilential diseases and sicknesses as are now generally amongst us, and see whether he have not begun to do with us as he threatened in his law. Surely for our sins, even because we have not obeyed his voice, and done after his commandments, he hath taken his rod, and already begun thus to punish us therewith; and this rod of his wrath, as we ourselves may see, he doth lay even upon his own children and faithful servants, as well as he doth upon the wicked and ungodly of the earth; but yet with this difference: upon the ungodly he layeth this rod of wrath, in wrath and displeasure, to render unto them according to the wickedness of their ways; the same rod also he layeth upon his children, not in wrath, but in love, to reform them and to reclaim them from the wickedness of their ways. Upon the ungodly he layeth this rod, and the stroke thereof enrageth them against God, so that in their sickness they are not only without all comfort and patience, but like unto cursed Cain they cry, My sickness is greater than I am able to bear! Why am I thns? What a severe judge is this, that layeth his hand so heavily upon me? The same rod also he layeth upon his children, but he giveth them patience under the rod, and strength to bear whatsoever he layeth upon them, so that in their sickness they are comfortable both in themselves and unto others. So that albeit the same rod lie upon both, yet doth God lay it upon them with great difference; which yet will better and more plainly appear unto us, if we shall briefly touch some of those reasons why he layeth this rod upon his children, why his children are visited with sickness. One reason is, as the apostle saith, 'that being chastened of the Lord, they may not be condemned with the world,' 1 Cor. xi. 32. For such is the loving mercy of the Lord towards his children, that when they have either omitted some such duties as they ought to have performed, or committed some such sin as they ought not to have done, he, as a loving father towards his tender child whom he dearly loveth, correcteth and chastiseth them with the rod of sickness, or weakness, or some such like rod, that so they may see their own error and be healed. 'For this cause,' saith the apostle, ver. 30, 'many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.' For this cause; for what cause? Even for not discerning the Lord his body, in coming unto the communion of the body and blood of Christ. In which place the apostle plainly sheweth, that therefore many of God's children are weak and sick, and die, even because they do not duly and diligently examine themselves before they come unto the celebration of the

Lord his supper. But, saith he, 'when we are judged and punished, we are chastened of the Lord,' as children of their father, 'that we should not be condemned with the world,' even with the wicked men of the world, whose portion is in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. Sometimes, then, God's children are sick, that so their error, or their negligence, or their wickedness may be reformed, and they brought into the right way wherein they should walk. Another reason is, that so they may be stayed from such inordinate ways as whereunto naturally they are bent, and wherein sometimes they would walk, if they were not holden back as with a bridle. For whose delight in the ways of the Lord is so entire and so altogether uncorrupt before him, that he maketh, as he should do, his law his whole delight and his counsellor? Nay, whose paths are so straight that he hath not an overweening delight in some crooked by-paths, or whose will, and desire, and affections, are so sanctified that they are not often inclined, and sometimes carried, as it were, with a main stream unto that which is evil? And therefore the Lord only wise, knowing best what is best for his children, sometimes visiteth them with sickness, that so being exercised with his rod they may not run into such danger of body and soul as otherwise they would. A third reason why the children of God are sick sometimes, is, that thereby he may make trial of their faith, and of their patience, to see whether they can be content, as to receive health, so to receive sickness of the Lord, and whether as in health, so in sickness, they will put their trust in the Lord, and submit themselves unto his will. For both health and sickness they are of the Lord, and both in health and in sickness we should put our trust in the Lord, and submit ourselves unto his will. Yet so choice we are, that we can be content to receive health from the Lord, but hardly to receive sickness from the Lord; and so weak we are, even the best of us, that howsoever we do in health, yet in sickness we can hardly submit ourselves unto God his will, and oftentimes more put our trust in physicians than in the Lord, as we read that that good king of Judah, Asa, did, 2 Chron. xvi. 12, therein declining from that right path wherein he ought to have walked. Sometimes then, as I say, God's children are sick that the Lord their God may so try whether they will still cleave fast unto him, and patiently submit themselves unto his will. A fourth reason why the Lord sometimes visiteth his children with sickness is, that they also may have a farther trial of the merciful goodness of the Lord towards them. For albeit his children are never without great experiences of his merciful goodness towards them, yet wherein have they greater experience thereof, and wherein their soul more to rejoice than that in the time of their sickness he assisteth them with the comfort of his Holy Spirit, and giveth them strength and patience to endure what he layeth upon them, and suffereth not their faith or

their hope to fail, but so prepareth them unto him, that come death, come life, they can willingly embrace either, because they know that come death, come life, they are the Lord's. An especial great goodness of the Lord towards his children, whereof they have such trial in time of their sickness, as that thereby not themselves alone, but such as are about them, are and may be greatly comforted. And sometimes no doubt they are sick, that seeing the goodness of the Lord towards them in time of their sickness, they may the rather praise the Lord for his goodness, and study to glorify his name in the time of their health. Not to trouble you with more reasons hereof, the last reason why the Lord visiteth his children with sickness is, to put them in mind both of that sin which dwelleth in them, and also of their mortality. For sickness is both the fruit of sin, and also the harbinger of death. For howsoever sin be not the only cause wherefore sickness cometh, yet is it always a cause wherefore it is sent, insomuch that we see when our Saviour healed some that were sick, he would say sometimes unto them, 'Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee,' Mat. ix. 2, in which speech he gave them this note, that sin was the principal cause of their sickness; and sometimes he would say unto them, 'Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee,' wherin in effect he told them that their sickness was a chastisement for their sin. And again, howsoever death doth not always follow sickness, yet ought sickness always to put us in mind of our mortality. Well, it may be that those our houses of clay, which in this or that sickness threaten to fall, may for a time be patched up again, yet they which threaten now to fall, at length shall fall, and down to the ground they shall be brought. For as the psalmist speaketh, Ps. lxxxix. 48, 'Who liveth that shall not see death, or who shall be able to deliver himself from the hand of the grave?' Of the dust of the earth we are, and to earth we shall return; and so many sicknesses as we are visited with, all should be unto us as so many remembrances, both of that sin which cleaveth so fast unto us, and likewise of death, which is the fruit thereof. Thus, then, ye see the reasons why the Lord layeth this rod of sickness upon his own children, namely, as a merciful and loving Father, to reform whatsoever error, negligence, or other fault is in them, to keep them back as with a bridle from inordinate walking, to make trial of their faith and patience, to give them trial of his merciful goodness towards them, and to put them in mind of sin dwelling in them, and of their mortality; whereby also ye may easily discern in what a different sort the Lord layeth on this rod on the godly and on the ungodly: on the one as a father, on the other as a judge; on the one in love, on the other in wrath; on the one to chastise and correct, on the other to punish and revenge; on the one to reform the wickedness of their

ways, on the other to recompense them their wickedness; on the one to save them from death and hell, on the other to bring them to the pit of destruction.

Hence, then, may the children of God receive notable comfort in all their sickness, and in all their visitations. For, O thou man of God and servant of the Most High, is the hand of thy God upon thee, art thou sick? This is no other cup than Epaphroditus hath drunk before thee, or than is common unto thee with all the sons of God. And albeit thou mayest seem unto thyself that thou art not privileged from the wicked and ungodly, because thou drinkest of the cup of his wrath, because thou art visited with sickness as well as they, and perhaps more than they, yet pluck up thine heart, be not discouraged, but be of good comfort, for he doth not rebuke thee in his anger, neither doth he chastise thee in his displeasure, but as a merciful and loving Father, in tender love and in great compassion, by this his gentle hand and loving correction he calleth thee to remembrance of thy ways, and lets thee see what thou art, and whither thou must. Thy heart is not sound and right with thy God, thou art negligent in doing of his will, thou hast walked in some by-path wherin thou shouldst not have walked; thus lovingly and mildly he correcteth thee, that thou mayest reform the wickedness of thy ways, and there may be an healing of thine error. Again, thou art walking where and whither thou shouldst not; thus he stayeth thee that thou run not thyself upon the rocks, and that thou make not shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Again, thus he trieth thee, that thy faith and thy patience being tried, thou mayest be made like unto pure and fine gold purified seven times in the fire. Again, thus he giveth thee full trial of his merciful goodness towards thee, comforting thee with the joy of the Holy Ghost in the bed of thy sickness, giving thee patience to endure his cross, confirming thy faith in Christ Jesus, and assuring thee of the hope of thy salvation. Lastly, thus he putteth thee in mind of thyself, that thou shouldst not forget thy God or thyself, but remembering that thou art both sinful and mortal, shouldst shake off sin, and so number thy days that thou mightst apply thine heart unto wisdom. Oh, how should not the remembrance of these things comfort thy soul when thou liest sick upon thy bed! Beloved, in the time of health let us think of these things, and in the day of sickness let us not be discouraged. I have stood the longer upon this point, because the time seemeth unto me so to require. Many of our brethren the Lord hath already taken unto himself, many in many places are presently sick, and sharply visited; and when our turn shall be, he only knoweth who maketh sick and restoreth unto health. In the mean time, let our health be to the glory of his name, and in the time of sickness let us comfort ourselves with these things.

I might here note the time when the Lord laid this

his rod of sickness upon Epaphroditus, which was even when he was faithfully and painfully occupied in the work of Christ, when he was carefully discharging the trust reposed in him by the church of Philippi, when he was ministering unto the holy apostle, lying then in prison, such things as he wanted. Let it not, therefore, seem strange unto us, if, when we are faithfully labouring in the works of our calling, even then the Lord strike us with any rod, or visit us with sickness. Which note I do the rather now point at by the way, because the manner of some is upon such occasions to make wonderful ill collections, as for example, the preacher confuting a point of popish doctrine growtheth to be so sick that he is forced to break off, and to come down before he can end the point. What is the collection? Did not ye see, say some that are popishly affected, how the Lord did even control his discourse, and by his judgment upon him gave sentence on our side? Another example: the judge, from his seat of justice, pronouneing sentence against the wicked traitor, or vile malefactor, presently, or quickly after, falleth sick, and haply not long after dieth. What is the collection? Thus say some, Hath the Lord given judgment upon him for such judgment as he gave against others. And thus becasne their foolishness cannot reach unto the depth of God's counsel and wisdom, in his visitations, they condemn them whom the Lord hath not condemned, and judge that as unholy and ill which the Lord approveth as holy and good. Whatsoever he doth is holy and good; and if he chastise us with his rods, even then when we are doing his will, who shall ask him a reason of that he doth? Let us therefore learn to submit ourselves unto the Lord, and let us beware how we judge of things according to our own reason and imagination, lest haply we condemn that which the Lord hath not condemned. But my meaning was only to touch this by the way. Now a word of the extremity of his sickness.

Very near unto death. Here was the extremity of his sickness. Epaphroditus had been sick, and so sick that he was very near unto death, even without all hope of recovery of health, in man's sight and judgment. Whence I note the wonderful counsel and wisdom of our God, who oftentimes brings his children even to the gates of hell, and thence calls them; to the pit of destruction, and thence fetches them; to death's door, so that there is but a step between them and death, and thence delivers them. Joseph was cast into the deep dungeon, and his feet set fast in the stocks, and thence the Lord delivered him. Jonah was cast into the sea, and there the Lord kept him alive. Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, and there the Lord rescued him, and delivered him from the teeth of the lions. The three children were cast into the hot fiery furnace, and there God provided for them, that the fire had no power over them to burn, no, not an hair of their head. But

most befitting our present purpose is the example of that good king Hezekiah, who was so sick that all physicians, as we say in a case of extremity, gave him over, and there was no hope of life, insomuch that the prophet Isaiah came unto him, and said unto him, 'Thus saith the Lord, Put thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live,' Isa. xxxviii. 1. Here was even the like extremity of sickness that Epaphroditus was brought unto. A step only between them and death, or rather no step, but they delivered out of the jaws of death, as a prey out of the teeth of the wild beast, or as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. And this the Lord may seem to do for these causes amongst many other: 1. Thereby to make his power more to be known amongst the sons of men; for what can more manifest the power of almighty God than to save us when the pit is now ready to shut her mouth upon us, and nothing but present death before us? 2. To increase their thankfulness, who, being brought unto the gates of death, are thence delivered; for how much nearer they were unto death, so much greater praises are due unto him that hath delivered them from death. 3. Thereby to humble them for ever under his mighty hand, by whom they yet live, move, and have their being; for what should more humble us than plainly to see that it is no way in ourselves, but in the Lord only, to save our life from death, and to deliver us from the power of the grave?

Seeing, then, it pleaseth the Lord oftentimes to bring even his dearest children, and choicest servants, into such extremities, as of other dangers, so of sickness, let us take heed how we judge them as plagued of God for their offences, because they are so extremely visited. Ye know it was the great fault of Job's friends, that still they urged him that surely he was a great and grievous sinner, a wicked and an ungodly man, because the Lord his hand was so heavy upon him. Nay, my brethren, though some of our brethren in these hot and sharp diseases, through extremity of pain, or otherwise howsoever, should sometimes break out into impatient speeches, yet let us take heed how we judge them as forsaken of the Lord. Ye know the example of Job, into what execrations and words of impatience he brake out through that extremity of grief wherewith he was holden, who yet was a very choice servant of the Lord, and whose patience is commended in the Scriptures.

Again, seeing it pleaseth the Lord oftentimes to bring even his dearest children and choicest servants into such extremities of sickness, let this be a comfort unto us in what extremity of sickness soever we shall be; for no new thing herein doth befall us, but such as oftentimes doth the dearest children of God; and he which delivered them from the hand of the grave, when the pit had even shut her mouth almost upon them, will also deliver us, if it shall be for his glory and our good. Sickness, and extremity of sickness, all are of the Lord, and all for the best unto his

children. Let us, therefore, in all things that befall us, submit ourselves unto the will of the Lord, as that

both in heart and voice we ever pray, and say, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.'

LECTURE XLV.

But God had mercy on him ; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.—

PHILIP. II. 27.

BUT God had mercy on him. Where the apostle first setteth down the cause of his recovery and restoring unto health, which was God's mercy. 2. The extent and bountifulness of God's mercy therein, reaching not to Epaphroditus alone, but to Paul also. 3. The apostle setteth down the cause why the Lord in mercy towards him also restored Epaphroditus unto health, to wit, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow, *i. e.* lest unto that sorrow, which already he had by his bands and imprisonment, there should have been added another sorrow for his death. The words are so plain and easy in themselves to be understood, that there needeth no further opening or explication of them. Let us therefore see what notes and observations we may gather hence, whereof we may make some use unto ourselves.

But God had mercy on him. By which phrase of speech the apostle signifieth Epaphroditus his recovery and restoring unto health; yet see how the apostle was not content barely to say, but he was restored unto health; but signifying even this same thing, he withal noteth both who restored him, and wherefore he was restored unto health, saying, 'But God had,' &c. As if he should have said, but God for his mercy's sake restored him unto health. Whence I note, that it is the Lord that woundeth and maketh whole, that both visiteth us with sickness, and also holdeth our soul in life, and healeth all our infirmities. For so the Lord himself saith, Deut. xxxii. 39, 'Behold now, for I, I am he, and there is no god with me : I kill, and give life ; I wound, and I make whole.' And again in Exodus, chap. xv. 26, saith the Lord, 'I am the Lord that healeth thee.' And therefore the prophet thus prayeth, Jer. xvii. 14, 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be whole ; save me, and I shall be saved.' And the prophet David thus stirreth up himself to praise the Lord, saying, Ps. ciii. 2, 3, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits : which forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities,' or, 'all thy sicknesses and diseases.' It is the Lord then, ye see, that healeth our sickness, and holdeth our soul in life ; yea, it is even he that delivereth us both from the first, and likewise from the second death. Yet I would not here be mistaken, as if I judged that because it is the Lord that healeth our infirmities, therefore in the bed of our sickness we should only call upon the Lord, and neglect the means ordained for the recovery of our health. For as he hath appointed the end, so hath he ordained the means

unto the end ; and albeit sometimes he work without means, and restore unto health without any medicine or physic at all, yet most ordinarily he worketh by means, and restoreth unto health by medicine and physic. And therefore we are not at any time to neglect the means of physic, and such like helps, for the recovery of our health, but rather we are to use them with all thankfulness unto the Lord for them, and with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for his blessing upon them. We see how that good king Hezekiah, when it had been told him of the Lord by the prophet, 2 Kings xx. 5, 6, thus, 'Behold, I have healed thee ; and the third day thou shalt go up to the house of the Lord ; and I will add unto thy days fifteen years ;' yet for all that, when the prophet said unto him, ver. 7, 'Take a lump of dried figs, and lay it upon the boil, and thou shalt recover,' he took it, and laid it on, and recovered. He might have said, Hath the Lord spoken, and will he not perform it ? He hath promised me health, and a lengthening of my days for fifteen years ; what need I more than his word, what need I any medicine, or prescript from any physician ? But we see he used no such speech, but as it pleased the Lord to use these means in restoring him to health, so he with all thankfulness used the means, and was restored unto health. Let us therefore know that it is the Lord only that delivereth from death, and restoreth unto life and health ; and that this he doth sometimes without means, and most commonly by means. Let us therefore in the bed of our sickness call upon the Lord, and let us not neglect the means which he hath ordained for the recovery of our health. Let us only trust in the Lord, and let us know that if the means be helpful unto us, it is because of the Lord his blessing upon them. He blesseth the means, and therefore we are healed by the means, so that he healeth, and therefore we are healed.

Now what is the cause wherefore the Lord, having visited us with sickness, doth again raise us from the bed of our sickness, and restore us unto health ? This is not for anything in ourselves, but for his own mercy's sake, as the apostle plainly sheweth when he saith, 'But God had mercy on him ;' for it is as if he had said, But God for his mercy's sake restored him unto health. Whence I gather this note, that restoring unto health is a mercy of the Lord ; which is further proved unto us by that song or psalm of thanksgiving, which Hezekiah made after his restoring unto health, where he saith, Isa. xxxviii. 17, 'Behold,

for felicity I had bitter grief; but it was thy pleasure to deliver my soul from the pit of corruption.' It was thy pleasure, or it was thy love to deliver my soul, &c., where that is ascribed to God's love, whence his mercy floweth, which in our apostle is ascribed unto God's mercy. So that restoring unto health is a loving mercy of the Lord. What shall we say then? When wicked and ungodly men are restored unto health, is this a loving mercy of the Lord towards them? Yes, surely. For albeit so their sin, and consequently their judgment be increased, yet this not coming from this mercy of lengthening their days, but from their own corrupt nature, we are to account that health, and life, and wealth, and whatsoever else they have, are temporal mercies of the Lord upon them. Howbeit the mercies of the Lord in restoring his children unto health, and in restoring the wicked unto health, are much different. His mercy wherein he restoreth the wicked unto health, is a general mercy, whereby he taketh pity upon all men, proceeding from such a love as whereby he maketh his sun to arise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust. But his mercy wherein he restoreth his children unto health, is a special mercy, whereby he taketh pity upon his children, proceeding from that love wherewithal he loveth us in Christ Jesus. By that the wicked are only restored unto bodily health, by this the children of God are so restored unto bodily health, that farther in soul they are more quickened than before; by that the judgment of the wicked is increased, for that they abuse their health, whereunto in mercy they are restored, unto the dishonour of God; by this God's name is more glorified in his children, for that they use their health, whereunto in mercy they are restored, to the praise of the glory of God's grace. In a word, by that the wicked are made more inexcusable, by this the children of God are made more fruitful in good works, and more assured of God's love. Albeit, then, it be a mercy of the Lord both to the godly, and likewise to the ungodly, that they are restored unto health, for that the Lord might in justice have suffered his rod to lie longer upon them, if he had dealt with them in weight and measure, yet is it such a special mercy proceeding from such a special love which he vouchsafeth unto his children in restoring them to health, as that the wicked and ungodly have no part or portion at all therein.

Is it, then, such a special mercy unto God's children that are restored unto health? Were not death rather a special mercy of the Lord unto them? or had not death then been a special mercy unto Epaphroditus? Surely it cannot be denied, but that it is a special mercy of the Lord unto his children, if when he hath exercised them with his rod, and prepared them by sickness unto himself, he take them by death out of the miseries of this life, and translate them into the kingdom of his Son. 'For so saith the Spirit, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' And why? 'For they rest from

their labours; and their works follow them,' Rev. xiv. 13. They rest from their labours. What is that? That is, by death they are delivered and freed from such griefs, and sorrows, and labours, and troubles, and revilings, and persecutions, and hatreds, and other manifold calamities whereunto this life is subject, yea, and from that grievous yoke and heavy bondage of sin, which made the apostle to cry, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Rom. vii. 24. Again, their works follow them. What is that? That is, their good deeds which they did in the love of God, and in the love of his truth, after death accompany them, and they receive that crown of glory which the Lord in mercy hath promised to all them that love and fear him, and walk in his ways. So that whether we respect the end of wretched miseries, or the perfect fruition of everlasting happiness which the children of God have by death, it cannot be denied but death is an especial mercy of the Lord unto them. And in these respects death, then, had been a special mercy of the Lord unto Epaphroditus, and in these respects I doubt not it was, that Paul desired in the former chapter to be 'dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Philip. i. 23, even that he might be freed from the miseries of this life, and that he might be joined with his head Christ Jesus, to reign with him in his kingdom for ever in the time appointed of the Lord. But as death, so likewise life, and restoring unto health, is a special mercy of the Lord unto his children, because so they are made farther instruments of his glory who hath restored them unto health. For being restored unto health, both they consider the merciful goodness towards them, and so break out into his praises who hath done great things for them; whereas 'the grave cannot confess the Lord, neither death can praise him; but the living, the living,' as saith Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 18, 'they confess him, and sing praises unto his name;' and again being restored unto health, they consider that the Lord hath reserved them for his farther glory to be manifested in them, or by them, and therefore their study and care is so to lead their lives, as that God's name may be glorified in them, and by them. A good nature (you know) rejoiceth in every opportunity that is given him, whereby he may shew himself thankful and dutiful, though it be to his trouble and cost. Even so the children of God, though this life be full of trouble and grief, yet when their health is restored and their days lengthened, they rejoice in the opportunity God hath given them to do good in the church, or in the commonweal, and are careful therein to shew themselves both thankful and dutiful unto their God. For answer then unto the point, in man we are to consider briefly these two things, the good of himself, and the good of others, unto the glory of God. In respect of the good of himself, death is a special mercy of the Lord unto every child of God, because then they rest from their

labours, and their works follow them. And therefore the apostle said, Philip. i. 23, 'It is best of all to be loosed, and to be with Christ.' But in respect of others, and of the glory of God, it is a special mercy of God unto his children to be restored unto health, because so they are made farther instruments of his glory, and of the good either of church or of commonwealth. And therefore the apostle addeth, ver. 24, 'Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.' Albeit, then, death had been a special mercy of the Lord unto Epaphroditus in respect of the good of himself, yet in respect of the church at Philippi, it was a special mercy of the Lord, as our apostle here saith, that he was restored unto health. Neither yet would I so here be understood as if I thought or taught that it is a special mercy of the Lord unto his children to be restored unto health only in respect of the good of others, and not at all in respect of the good of themselves; for albeit death be so a special mercy of God unto them in respect of the good of themselves, for that thereby they are freed from the troubles of this life, and received into everlasting joy and bliss, yet is health also and life a special mercy of the Lord unto them, even in respect of the good of themselves, because the oftener they pass through the fire, the more they are purified, and made the finer gold; the more they are bolted and sifted, the finer flour they will be. Albeit therefore by life they have more troubles, yet because by troubles they are made more glorious, therefore is life and restoring unto health a special mercy of God unto his children, not only in respect of others' good, but in respect also of the good of themselves.

Are, then, both death and recovery of health special mercies of the Lord unto his children? If then we be the children of God, let not our hearts be troubled, nor fear in the bed of our sickness. If it please the Lord by death, then, to cut off our days, this let us know, that in mercy towards us he doth it, that so we may not see the evils that are to come; that so we may have rest from all our labours, and from all the troubles of this life; and that so we may be ever with our head Christ Jesus, and have the full fruition of those joys which eye hath not seen, neither ear hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to think of. And again, if it please the Lord to restore us unto health, let us know that in mercy likewise he doth it, that so we may confess his name, and sing praises unto him in the land of the living; that so we may be further instruments of his glory in doing good unto others, either in the church or in the commonwealth; and that so, being further tried, we may be further purified, to return as fine gold out of the fire. Hath any of us, then, cause to mourn for them that do already sleep in the Lord? Let us mourn, but not as men without hope; for the Lord hath had mercy on them, and in his mercy towards them hath delivered them out of prison into a most glorious liberty, and hath brought them from a most troublesome sea of miseries

unto the most happy haven of everlasting blessedness. Again, hath any of us been restored from sickness unto health? Let us remember that the Lord herein hath had mercy on us, as he had on Epaphroditus. For this mercy let us shew ourselves thankful unto the Lord, and our thankfulness unto the Lord let us testify unto the world by walking worthy of this mercy. He hath reserved us unto his further glory. Let us glorify God both in our bodies, and in our spirits, for they are God's. Let us be faithfully, and painfully, and carefully occupied in the works of our calling, whatsoever it be, unto the glory of our God. And in particular, as this time requireth, as God hath had mercy on us by restoring us unto health, and bringing us from the gates almost of death unto life, so let us take pity and compassion on our poor distressed brethren, and by our morsels of bread and other relief let us save their lives from death. As our lives were precious in God's sight, so let their lives be preeious in our sight, who haply are as dear unto God as we are. For know this, that 'blessed are they that consider the poor and needy,' &c., Ps. xli. 1-3.

And not on him only, but on me also. We have heard of God's mercy on Epaphroditus in restoring him unto health, which was both a work of the Lord, and a work wherin the Lord shewed his mercy on Epaphroditus. Now see the riches and the bountifulness of God's mercy herein; for, in restoring him unto health, God's mercy was not shewed on him alone, but on the apostle Paul also. The note which hence I gather is this, that in the mercies of the Lord upon his children there is oftentimes a blessing, not for them alone in particluar, but for others of his children also. So sometimes he sheweth mercy on the child, and keepeth him alive for his parents' sake, to be their staff of comfort in their old age; and again, sometimes he sheweth mercy upon parents, and keepeth them alive for their children's sake, to bring them up in the fear of God and in the knowledge of his will. So likewise sometimes he sheweth mercy on the pastor, and from sickness restoreth him to health, for his people's sake, both that they may be kept safe from scattering by the wolf, and that they may be taught in the ways of the Lord: and again, sometimes he sheweth mercy on the people for their pastor's sake, lest that punishment which should justly light upon them should bring too much sorrow upon him. So we read that he shewed mercy unto that good king Hezekiah, being sick unto death, in restoring him unto health, 2 Kings xx. 1; neither unto him alone, but even therein likewise he shewed mercy unto the people of Judah, in that, ver. 7, so he kept them for fifteen years' space from such manifold miseries and corruptions in religion as afterwards followed in the reign of Manasseh, chap. xxi. 2. Thus the Lord, rich in mercy, so shews his mercies unto his children, as that therein there is a blessing not to them alone, but to others also.

This should teach us thus much, that we should not be too much puffed up for whatsoever mercies the Lord vouchsafeth unto us, as if for our own sakes alone they were bestowed upon us, but seeing therein the Lord also purposeth a blessing unto others, our care should be to use them to the benefit of others; our health to profit others, our wealth to do good unto others, our knowledge to instruct others, and whatsoever mercies we have unto the good of others. Which lesson also our Saviour Christ taught unto Peter, when he said unto him, Luke xxii. 32, 'Thou, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' But how have they learned this lesson, that like unto that unprofitable servant in the Gospel, Mat. xxv., hide their talent in the ground, and never do good with that knowledge wherewithal God hath blessed them? or they that, like unto that rich man in the Gospel, Luke xvi. 19, only feed and clothe themselves, and never regard to refresh poor Lazarus, no, not with the crumbs that fall from their tables? Or they that, like unto Nimrod, that mighty hunter before the Lord, by their power and might cruelly oppress, and wickedly tyrannise over their poor brethren? How have those parents learned this lesson, that never regard the godly education of their children? or those children that despise their fathers' instruction and forsake their mothers' teaching? or those pastors that seldom or never look unto their sheep? or those sheep that will not hear the voice of their pastors? Certainly, in men of all sorts there is either great ignorance, or great forgetfulness, or great contempt of this instruction; for generally we do not use the mercies of God upon us unto the benefit of others, but either we know not, or we forget, or we neglect so to use them, or we do abuse them unto the hurt of others. Well, let us know that, as this mercy was shewed on Epaphroditus, not for his sake only, but for Paul's, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow, so whatsoever such mercy is shewed on us, it is not for our own sakes only, but for others' also, that they may have comfort and profit thereby, or otherwise lest they should some way be grieved and troubled. And therefore, as the Lord hath bestowed this or that mercy upon us, of health, or of wealth, or of wisdom, or of knowledge, or the like, let us use the same to the good and benefit of others, as our state, or place, or calling doth require, and in any case let us beware that we abuse them not unto the hurt of others.

Now let us see wherein it was a mercy of God upon Paul that Epaphroditus was restored unto health. The apostle sheweth it when he saith, 'lest I should have,' &c. Herein, then, was it a mercy of God on Paul that Epaphroditus died not upon that sickness, because so he should have had sorrow upon sorrow; unto his sorrow by his own bonds and imprisonment should have been added another sorrow for his death. God therefore had mercy on Epaphroditus, and restored him unto health, not for his own sake only,

but for Paul's, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow.

What then? Was Paul sorrowful for anything that befell him, or that was likely to befall him? Did he not with patience bear whatsoever did or could befall him? Or could he be said to bear that with patience for which he was sorrowful? That Paul was sorrowful for many things, may and doth appear even by this one place. He was sorrowful for his own bonds and imprisonment; he was sorrowful to see Epaphroditus, and to hear the Philippians, to be so full of heaviness; and if Epaphroditus had now died, his death would have made him very sorrowful. All which notwithstanding, he did with patience bear both his own bonds and the heaviness of Epaphroditus and the Philippians, and so would have borne Epaphroditus his death if he had died. For herein was his patience seen, that he did with such constancy and courage, for Christ's sake, suffer those things which caused his sorrows, as that he was not overcome of sorrow, but so moderated it, as that he mildly bore whatsoever caused sorrow. And how is patience seen but in moderating sorrows, and quietly suffering them, and whatsoever may cause them?

The note then is, that sorrow and the like affections and passions of minds are no things unbeseeming Christians, as some have foolishly thought, but rather such things as very well beseem them. It was prophesied of our Saviour, Isa. liii. 3, that he should be a man full of sorrows; and that he was so, may appear by his weeping over Jerusalem, by his trouble in spirit at the death of Lazarus, and by many other things. Nay, how shall we call him a Christian that hath shut up all bowels of compassion, and is not touched with a fellow-feeling of his brethren's infirmities? Herein is a good point of true Christianity, that we rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep, and that we bear with patience our own sorrows, and whatsoever loss or cross which may cause sorrow.

Yea, but was it not a fault for Paul to be sorry for Epaphroditus his sickness? or should it not have been a fault in him if he had been sorry for his death, seeing these things came, and should have come, by the will of God? No surely: both in him it was, and in all Christians it is, a Christian thing to visit the sick, and to be sorry for their infirmities and for their death. So was Christ, so were the apostles, and so are all Christians, and ought to be. For what other thing is this for them that be strong and in health, than for the rich to give unto the poor, for the learned to instruct the ignorant, for the strong to help the weak? &c.

Yea, but we are forbidden to sorrow for the dead, 1 Thes. iv. 13. How, then, should it not have been a fault in Paul to have sorrowed for Epaphroditus his death? Sorrow for the dead is not there simply forbid, but such sorrow as they have which have no hope of the resurrection of the dead, and of life everlasting after this life. They sorrow immoderately,

because they think that when death comes there is an end. Such immoderate sorrow for the dead is there forbid, lest we should seem, by our too much sorrowing, so to think of the dead as the Gentiles did. But a moderate sorrow is neither there nor elsewhere forbid, but rather commended unto us by this example of our holy apostle. So that we may sorrow for the dead if we do it moderately, and with submission unto the will of the Lord, knowing that whatsoever he doth is good, and that all things work together for the best unto those that love and fear him.

Yea, but had not Paul the gift of healing? If, then, Epaphroditus his sickness or death were such a matter of sorrow unto him, why did he not heal him? That Paul had the gift of healing, appeareth by many places in the Acts, as where it is said that 'God wrought no small miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick kerchiefs, or hand-

kerchiefs, and the diseases departed from them,' Acts xix. 11, 12. And again, where it is said that he healed the father of Publius, who lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux, and that he healed many which had diseases in that island, chap. xxviii. 8, 9, yet it is very like that he could not heal Epaphroditus, albeit no doubt he would gladly have had him whole. And this is a plain proof unto us that the apostles healed sicknesses and wrought other miracles, not by any virtue or power of their own, but by the power of God; not whensoever they would themselves, but when it pleased the Lord they should; as also it is said in the Acts, chap. v. 12, that God wrought many signs and wonders by the hands of the apostles. Being, therefore, only God's instruments to heal diseases and to work miracles, neither our apostle nor any of the rest could, whensoever they would, do these things, but only when he would, whose instruments they were.

LECTURE XLVI.

I sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye should see him again, ye might rejoice, and I might, &c.—PHILIP. II. 28-30.

THUS far of the first cause, why Epaphroditus was so presently sent unto the Philippians. Now follow the other causes.

I sent him therefore, &c. The first cause why he presently sent him unto them was, as we have heard, because of Epaphroditus himself; because he so longed after them, that he was full of heaviness till he might see them, as verse 26. Other two causes of such present sending him unto them are mentioned in this verse, in the words now read unto you: the one, because of the Philippians, that they, when they should see their minister again, might rejoice; in these words, 'that when ye should see him again,' &c.; the other, because of the apostle himself, that he might be the less sorrowful, when they should have cause to rejoice by his presence with them; in these words, 'and I might be the less sorrowful.' The words, ye see, are inferred by way of conclusion, 'I sent him therefore,' &c. Where it is to be noted, that whereas before he had said, 'I thought it necessary to send him unto you,' now he addeth a note of diligence and speed which he used herein, saying, 'I sent him therefore the more diligently.' And wherefore did he use such diligence and speed in sending him? That is signified in the next words to have been, partly in behalf of the Philippians, that when they should see him again they might rejoice that he had so well recovered his health, and that now they might have the fruit of his labours amongst them; and partly in behalf of himself, that he might be the less sorrowful; whereby the apostle signifieth, that albeit he shall not be quite without sorrow when they shall have cause to rejoice in Epaphroditus his presence, because there

were many things besides which gave him cause of sorrow, yet he shall be much less sorrowful, because he shall be eased of that sorrow which he conceived upon Epaphroditus his sickness, and upon their heaviness for his sickness. Now, before we proceed farther, let us see what observations we may gather hence for our use and instruction.

I sent him therefore the more diligently. In these words I note the diligence, and carefulness, and speed which the apostle used in sending Epaphroditus unto the Philippians, notwithstanding himself at this time had so great use of him as that almost he could not be without him; for the apostle, lying now in prison, where Epaphroditus ministered unto him such things as he wanted, it could not be but he must needs have great use of him; yet, when the apostle heard that they were so full of heaviness for his sickness, and that they greatly desired to see him, he slacked no diligence, neither used any delay, but with what diligence and with what speed he could, he sent him unto them. Whence I observe the nature and disposition of a faithful friend, which is not to delay the time, but whatsoever excuse else we might make, with all diligence to gratify our friend when his need doth require. For as cheerfulness and willingness, so carefulness and readiness then to pleasure when need doth require, are very requisite in the performance of every duty of one friend unto another. Yea, but where shall a man find such a friend, as, without delay, when need doth require, will do the duty of a friend, when he might have haply just excuse to the contrary? Surely I must here say unto thee as Isaac said unto Jacob, when he advised him whence to take a wife, Gen.

xxviii. 1, 2. ‘Take not a wife,’ saith he, ‘of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, get thee to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother’s father, and thence take thee of the daughters of Laban, thy mother’s brother;’ or, as Abraham had said before touching the marriage of Isaac, chap. xxiv. 3, 4, ‘Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, but go into my country, and to my kindred, and thence take a wife unto him.’ So I say unto thee, if thou wilt make good choice of thy friend, get thee unto the household of faith, and there shalt thou find such a friend as now we speak of; join thyself unto them in whom there is religion, and the true fear of God, and in them thou shalt find that which thy soul desireth. Others can, and will, make as fair a show oftentimes as the best, and yet fail thee haply then when thou most needest them; every little pretence will serve them for excuse good enough, but if they can have such an excuse as here Paul the apostle might have had, though thou stand in as much need of help as here the Philippians stood of comfort, hope thou mayest, but help thou shalt find none. But they that are joined unto thee in Paul’s spirit, they that are linked unto thee in that best bond of love, the fear of the Lord, they will not fail thee in the needful time of trouble, they will not shift thee off for this and that time, with this or that excuse, but with all diligence, and with all speed, they will be ready to help thee, and to comfort thee as thy need doth require; for indeed sincerity in religion, and the true fear of the Lord, are the best bands of Christian friendship. We read in profane stories of some much renowned for most rare friendship; but what else were those but as shadows in respect of the body? What friendship of theirs came ever near unto that of Jonathan and David, 1 Sam. xvii. 1, whose souls were so knit either unto other as that either loved other as his own soul? Who more faithful unto any than Hushai the Archite unto David, 2 Sam. xv., at whose request he took, as we say, his life in his hand, and undertook with all diligence and speed to bring to nought the counsel of Ahithophel? Yea, generally where religion and the fear of the Lord knits the knot, there the friendship is most sure, and the duties thereof best performed. If therefore thou wilt have such a friend as, without delay, when need doth require, will do the duty of a friend, and not shift thee off for this and that time, with this and that excuse, join thyself unto him that is religious, and feareth the Lord, and let your love be in the Lord, and for the Lord; for what is the cause wherefore friendship is so rare, and why there is such slackness in all sorts of men to help one another, and to comfort one another in any time of need? Surely hence, even because our love is only a cold love, grounded on this or that worldly respect, but we do not love one another in the Lord, and for the Lord, because our soul delighteth in them that fear the Lord. Oh, let all of

us delight in them that fear the Lord, and then will we, no doubt, as Paul’s scholars, be diligent one unto another’s good, and one unto another’s comfort in every time of need.

It followeth, ‘that when ye should see him again, ye might rejoice.’ In these words the apostle setteth down a second cause and reason, wherefore he sent Epaphroditus unto the Philippians with such diligence and speed. The cause was, as here it is signified, that after such sorrow and heaviness of heart as they were filled with upon the hearing of their minister’s dangerous sickness, thinking they should never see him again, they might rejoice when they should see him again thoroughly well in health, and able to do the work of his ministry. Here, then, we see how a faithful friend is especially to employ his diligence and his carefulness, namely, as in matters most needful, so in them to the best purpose he can devise. A notable pattern whereof we have in this example of our apostle. The Philippians were at this present full of heaviness and sorrow, as we have heard, for their minister’s sickness, and they much needed to be cheered and comforted. The apostle he uscd all diligence, and after he heard and knew of it, he delayed not the time to cheer them, and to comfort them. But how? He might have written his letters unto them, and therein signified their minister’s recovery of his health, and so have cheerd and comforted them. But because he thought neither messenger, nor letters, nor anything else would so much rejoice them as his presence with them, and the sight of him, because they thought they should never have seen him again, therefore he sent himself unto them, that when they should see him again they might rejoice, so taking the best course that he could devise to comfort them. So we see in the example of Hushai before mentioned; when David was in great distress by Absalom his son, Hushai came unto him with purpose to go with him, and in life or death not to leave him, 2 Sam. xv. 32-34; but when it was thought that his friendship would be to better purpose unto David, if he should return unto the city, and bring the counsele of Ahithophel to nought, he did that which was thought would be to the best purpose, ver. 37. Right so if we will approve ourselves faithful friends indeed, as we must employ all diligence and carefulness in matters most needful for our friend, so must we do it to the best purpose we can devise. For albeit diligence and carefulness in every matter of our friend be very commendable in us, yet is it then worthily most commendable when it is employed to the best purpose: 1. When our care is specially bent to that which apparently may be to our friend’s greatest good and comfort. A matter of too, too rare practice. Few careful of others’ good, and of those few that will seem sometimes to be careful, very few that will care for them in things most needful, and fewest of all that will, in such sort, care for them in things needful, as may be most be-

hateful for them. If the course most behovful for our friend be somewhat hurtful for ourselves, we will rather think of some other course than that, whereby we may so help our friend as that withal we may not hurt ourselves; and so that we shew ourselves friends, we think it is well though we do not so much as we should. Well, I wish we would think of this example of our holy apostle, and as he was most diligent and careful, not only to comfort the Philippians, but in such sort to comfort them as they most desired, so we would be diligent and careful both to do good unto others, and that likewise in such sort as they thereby might receive the greatest good, though haply ourselves should be somewhat endamaged thereby.

What then? Haply you will say unto me, Was it such a commendable matter in the apostle to send their minister back again unto them? or was it such a pleasure unto the Philippians to see their minister again? It may be that some would stand at an answer to these questions in particlular, who shew but too plainly by their practice what they think of these questions in the general. For touching the ministers in general, who is he that, if his minister be absent from his church, greatly longeth after him? Who is he that, if his minister be sick unto death, greatly wisheth his restoring unto health? Who is he that, if his minister be absent and sick, fears that he shall never see him again? or, who is he that will take such a pleasure and joy of heart in it if he shall see him again? Some such, God be thanked, there are, and God for his mercy's sake increase the number of them, and his graces in them! But, generally, if the minister be such a one as makes a conscience of his ways amongst them, as carefully feeds them with the bread of life, and painfully leads them forth besides the waters of comfort; such a one as will religiously call them unto the sanctification of the Lord his Sabbath, and restrain them of their incriment, and sports, and pleasures, and wanton dalliances; such a one as will sharply reprove their sins, boldly put them in mind of their duties, and carefully reclaim them from such inordinate ways as they walk in; such a one as we may very well presume this Epaphroditus was: if the minister, I say, be such a one, generally we long not for his presence if he be absent, generally we sorrow not for his sickness if he be sick, generally we take no such pleasure either in his presence or in his life. Nay, rather if he be absent, we will wish him far enough, and to tarry long enongh; and if he be sick unto death, we will rejoice and be glad at his death. So far short of these Philippians that were but newly planted in the church, and had but lately embraced the truth of Christ Jesus, are we who have long enjoyed the ministry of the word, and the bright light of the holy word of truth. For so they accounted, that the apostle could not have given a greater token of love of them, than to send their minister back again unto them, and it was the greatest pleasure and joy

of heart that might be unto them to see their minister again thoroughly well and in good health. And surely, if we took that joy and comfort in the word that we ought, we would take more joy and comfort in the ministers of the word than we do. But how the ministers of the word are to be accounted of, we shall see in the handling of the next verse that followeth. It now followeth:—

And I might be the less sorrowful. In these words the apostle setteth down a third cause or reason why he sent their minister unto them with such diligence and speed. And this cause respected himself. For it was that he might be the less sorrowful. 1. That howsoever his sorrows after this should be some for some other things, yet they might be the less when their joys were fulfilled by their minister's presence, and when their minister should again be amongst them to labour amongst them. In that, then, that the apostle saith not, 'and that I might be without sorrow,' but only, 'and that I might be the less sorrowful,' hence I gather this observation, that the children of God are not much to hope, nor greatly to seek, in this life to be quit and rid of all sorrow, but it is enough for them if their sorrows be abated, and if they have less sorrow than they deserve, and than they are enabled to bear. 'In the world,' saith our Saviour, John xvi. 33, 'ye shall have affliction,' even many causes of sorrow, and grief, and vexation of spirit. For so it is ordained that 'through many afflictions we should enter into the kingdom of God,' as the apostle saith, Acts xiv. 22. And therefore our Saviour Christ saith again, Luke ix. 23, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.' Daily, saith he. For as one day followeth another, so one cross followeth in the neck of another. We look and hope for an holy city, the new Jerusalem, where 'God shall wipe all tears from our eyes, and where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither crying, neither any more pain,' Rev. xxi. 4. But that city is not here on earth, where we be but pilgrims; it is in our country in heaven, where we shall have an abiding city, and where we shall be ever with the Lord. Nay, if it were here on earth, we would not long for that in heaven. Let us not, therefore, look in this life to be without all trouble, or sorrow, or grief. Let us rather consider how in this life our whole life is stained with many sins, and how for our sins we have deserved not only death everlasting after this life, but troubles also and sorrows unsupportable in this life. And then, when we see that we are not only freed from that death by the death of Jesus Christ, and by faith in his name, but that our serrows in this life are much less than we deserve, let us rejoice in the Lord, and comfort ourselves in his mercies, that our troubles and sorrows are nothing in comparison of that we have deserved. And again, let us consider, that howsoever our troubles, and sorrows, and griefs be many, yet so only they

press us, as that we are able to say with the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, ' We are afflicted on every side, yet are we not in distress ; in poverty, but not overcome of poverty ; we are persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but we perish not,' &c. And then, when we see that our troubles, and sorrows, and griefs are no more but such as the Lord hath enabled us to bear, let us rejoice in the Lord, and comfort ourselves in his mercies towards us, who doth not suffer us to be tempted above that we be able, but giveth the issue together with the temptation, that we may be able to bear it. For surely these are great mercies of the Lord towards us, that our sorrows are so lessened and abated that they are neither such as we have deserved, neither such but that we are able to bear them, by the power of him who doth strengthen us thereunto. And, therefore, though in this life we be not quite free from all troubles and sorrows, yet let us account this a great mercy of the Lord unto us, that we are less sorrowful, that our sorrows are less than the desert of our sins, and less than he enableth us to bear.

But how was it that the apostle should be less sorrowful by sending their minister Epaphroditus unto them ? Because by his presence they should have occasion to rejoice. For as by their heaviness for their minister his sorrow was increased, so again by their rejoicing for their minister, his sorrow would be abated. Here, then, we may observe another notable quality of Christian love and friendship, which is to ' weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that rejoice,' a rule which the apostle giveth all Christians to observe and keep, Rom. xii. 15, and from which whoso declineth may seem therein to cross even nature itself. For naturally we see that the members of our body are so affected one towards another, as that, ' if one member suffer, all suffer with it, and if one be had in honour, all the members rejoice with it,' 1 Cor. xii. 26. How much more should it be so in the mystical body of Christ Jesus, that they who are joined together in one faith, and in one baptism, should so likewise be joined together in love and affection one towards another, that the sorrow of one should be the sorrow of another, and the joy of one should be the joy of another ? But I have had occasion heretofore to observe this note unto you, and therewithal the great want of this Christian love in us one towards another, for that we are so far from this duty, as that we weep and are sorry one at the prosperity of another, and again laugh and rejoice one at the calamity of another. If either by that or this instruction ye be taught in this duty, then practise it ; and if either by that or this admonition ye see your want in the performance of this duty, then study to amend that which is amiss, and learn so to be affected one towards another, as that ye will rejoice with them that rejoice, and again weep with them that weep.

Again, it may be that the apostle was sorry that, by his occasion, their minister and teacher was so

long absent from them ; and therefore, now when Epaphroditus was sent back again unto them, he was the less sorrowful. But this being only a conjecture, my purpose is not to ground any observation thereupon. Only this, neither may the example of the apostle be any precedent for any to detain the minister from his charge, neither may the example of Epaphroditus be to any minister any precedent to absent himself from his charge. For Epaphroditus was now absent from his people, being sent by them to minister to the necessities of the holy apostle ; so that albeit he was absent from them, yet was he labouring for them even in the work of Christ, as the apostle speaketh in the last verse of this chapter. How, then, can this example help them who absent themselves either for idleness and their own ease, or upon other pretences which have no lawful warrant ? Again, his staying there with the apostle, was not so much by the apostle his detaining of him, as by the Philippians' charge that he should stay with him, and by the sickness where-with God visited him. How, then, can this example be any warrant unto them who detain ministers from their charge, either for their own pleasure's sake, or in some other respect which hath no better warrant ? I wish that both these men would be as sorry for detaining ministers from their charge, as it is likely the apostle was, and likewise that the ministers [were] as sorry for being absent from their charges, as it is likely Epaphroditus was. This were a precedent worthy the following, the other is a precedent without all ground or shadow of any semblance. But I purposed only to touch this by the way. Now followeth the apostle his request for Epaphroditus.

Receive him therefore in the Lord, &c. The apostle having shewed the causes why he sent Epaphroditus unto the Philippians, now commendeth him unto them, and maketh request for him, that they would entertain him on his return as they ought, shewing withal a reason in the next verse why they should do so. In this verse, 1, he sheweth how they ought to receive and entertain him in particular ; 2, how they ought to entertain all ministers generally, being such as he was. First, touching the entertainment of him in particular, the apostle willett them to receive him, first in the Lord, then with all gladness. In that he willett and exhorteth them to receive him in the Lord, his meaning is that they should receive him, not as a private friend, not as one sent from him, whom for his sake they should use kindly, but as the servant of the Lord, and as one sent even by God himself unto them. For herein the apostle may in part seem to allude unto that extremity of sickness, whence he could not possibly have been delivered but only by God's mercy on him. And therefore now he was sent unto them, not so much by the apostle, as by the Lord, who only did save his life from death. Again, in that he exhorteth them to receive him with all gladness, his meaning is, that as he longed after them all, so they

should all receive him with all gladness, even with exceeding joy for his coming unto them, for so the same words that are here used are well translated, James i. 2.

Here, then, we are taught how to entreat, and entertain, and receive the ministers of the Lord ; first, 'in the Lord,' that is, as servants of the Lord, and sent by God unto us. So the apostle giveth testimony unto the Galatians that they received him, where he saith, chap. iv. 14, 'But ye received me as an angel of God, yea, as Christ Jesus ;' and that they are so to be honoured and accounted of, he again sheweth where he saith, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so think of us as of the ministers of Christ, and disposers of the secrets of God.' And why are they so to be thought of, and so to be honoured ? The reason is plain, they are the ambassadors of Christ Jesus, in Christ his stead, beseeching us that we would be reconciled unto God. So saith the apostle : 2 Cor. v. 20, 'Now, then,' saith he, 'we are ambassadors for Christ ; as though God did beseech you through us, we pray you in Christ his stead, that ye be reconciled unto God.' Now ambassadors, ye know, are to be received as the prince from whom they are sent, so that the ministers of Christ are to be received even as Christ ; and therefore our Saviour saith, Mat. x. 40, 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.' Again, ambassadors, ye know, speak not in their own name, but in the prince's name that sent them, so that the ministers of Christ are to be heard as Christ, whose ministers they are. And therefore our Saviour saith, Luke x. 16, 'He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.' And yet see how hardly we are brought to receive and hearken to this instruction. Indeed, it grieveth me to see how the ministers of the Lord are received even in this auditory. Every fit opportunity hath been taken to put you in mind of these things, and what nearer are ye than at the first ? Are the ministers of Christ Jesus to be received in the Lord, and for the Lord ? Are they the ambassadors of Christ Jesus, and therefore to be received, and to be heard as Christ Jesus ? How happens it, then, that some will not at all almost come to hear them, that some come so slackly to hear them, and that some turn their backs upon them, and will

not stay to hear them ? If the ambassador of an earthly prince should be used in such like sort, would not sharp storms and sore displeasure follow upon it ? And shall the ambassadors of the King of heaven and King of kings be so used, and will not his anger and heavy displeasure be kindled at it ? If we sought our honour, we might well go without it, seeing the Lord cannot have it. But we seek not our own honour, but the honour of him that sends us, even the honour of Christ Jesus, whose word we preach unto you. We would be honoured for the word's sake, and therefore we would have the word much more honoured ; and therefore we call you unto the hearing of the word, even of the word of life, even of the word of your salvation. But how prevail we ? Those that will not come, what should I speak unto them ? I judge them not ; there is one that judgeth them. Of such as do come, some come so seldom, that it may seem they come when their leisure from other business gives them best leave. Business belike they have of greater importance than this, and which they are more to regard than the salvation of their souls. Others, they turn their backs upon the preacher, and stay they cannot, or they will not. I cannot but speak of it. What an unseemly thing was it, when, the last Lord's day, after the celebration of that holy sacrament of baptism, which, seeing the opportunity was given, might well have been celebrated after the sermon ; but what an unseemly thing, I say, was it, to see so many then turn their backs, and go their ways, some upon that occasion, and others therein keeping their wonted manner ! But take heed, men and brethren, how ye despise the word, and turn your backs upon it ; for howsoever now ye turn your backs upon it, yet shall it judge you in the last day, John xii. 48. If there be a fault in any of you, study to amend it, and let the word of Christ dwell in you all plenteously and in all wisdom, for 'it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,' Rom. i. 16. Receive the ministers of Christ in the Lord, and hearken unto their message for the Lord ; for though they be men that come unto you, yet are they men sent from the Lord, and their words are to be heard, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed, as the word of God. Happy are ye if ye hear these things, and meditate thereupon with fruit unto your souls. 'Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.'

LECTURE XLVII.

Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness : and make much of such ; because that for the work of Christ he was, &c.—PHILIP. II. 29, 30.

WITH all gladness. This is the second manner of entertainment that the apostle would have given unto Epaphroditus their minister at his return unto them. He would have them to receive him in

the Lord, and to receive him with all gladness ; that is, with such gladness as that both all should rejoice at his coming, and that with an exceeding joy, so that he would have both their joy to be universal, that all

should rejoice for him, as he had longed for them; and again, no ordinary joy, but an exceeding great joy, as the same words are very well translated, James i. 2.

What, such joy, so universal joy, so exceeding great joy for their minister's returning home in health unto them? Was Epaphroditus their minister? Was their minister thus to be received? Indeed, this would make a man to doubt, as the world goes now, whether Epaphroditus were their minister. Enough for a nobleman, a great man, one of the peers of the realm, thus to be received. A minister thus to be received, it is a scorn, a mere jest! Well, let it seem unto the world, as it will, a scorn and a jest, the apostle here, we see, would have them thus to receive their minister, and the ministers of the gospel are thus to be received, even with all gladness, so that all their people should rejoice, and that with exceeding great joy for them. 'Oh, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that declarereth and publisheth peace,' saith the prophet, Isa. lii. 7, 'that declarereth good tidings, and publisheth salvation, saying unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.' Now, of whom speaketh the prophet this? The apostle plainly applieth this unto the ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Rom. x. 15. They are they that declare and publish our peace and our reconciliation with God the Father by Jesus Christ his Son; they are they that declare the good tidings of the full and free remission of our sins by the death and passion of Jesus Christ; they are they that publish salvation unto every one that calleth upon the name of the Lord, and departeth from iniquity. How beautiful, then, should their feet be unto us! When they come unto us, or when the Lord rather sendeth them unto us, with what gladness should we receive them? Surely I will tell you. Consider that place yet a little further. The prophet there speaketh first and primarily of the deliverance of the children of Israel out of the captivity of Babylon, and of them that shold bring the message and glad tidings thereof. With what gladness, then, may we think would the children of Israel, when they were in the land of their captivity, receive them that would bring them good tidings of their deliverance out of captivity, and return unto their country and ancient liberty! Would not all of them receive them with great gladness? Would not all of them receive them with exceeding and unfeigned joy and rejoicing? With what gladness, then, should we receive the ministers of the gospel of Christ Jesus, who bring unto us most joyful tidings of a most blessed deliverance out of the most woeftul thrall and captivity that ever was, even out of the most tyrannical captivity of sin, death, and the devil! Surely we should receive them with an universal joy; we should receive them with an exceeding great joy; we should all of us be glad even in our very souls for them, and every way that we could we

should testify this our gladness for them. A good show of such gladness many of the Jews then gave, when Christ, riding into Jerusalem on an ass, they spread their garments in the way, and cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way, and cried through the streets of Jerusalem, and said, 'Hosanna the Son of David: Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna thou which art in the highest heavens,' Mat. xxi. 8, 9. Here were tokens, as of great honour done unto him, so of great gladness for him that was the high priest of our profession. And the evangelist St Luke, storying the same thing, saith, chap. xix. 37, 38, that 'the whole multitude of the disciples rejoiced, and praised God with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest places.' The whole multitude rejoiced, and that with no small joy, when they lift up their voices, and said, 'Blessed be he,' &c. So we read that, when Philip came to Samaria, and preached Christ unto them, Acts viii. 5, 6, 8, 'the people gave heed unto those things which Philip spake with one accord, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did,' and it is said that 'there was great joy in that city.' They heard Philip when he preached Christ unto them, they gave heed to the things he spake, and that with one accord, and upon this there was great joy in that city. So we read that when the apostle passed through Phenice and Samaria, Acts xv. 3, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and no doubt strengthening the brethren also in the faith wherein they stood, it is said that 'they brought great joy unto all the brethren;' no ordinary joy, but a great joy; not unto a small number, but unto all the brethren. Thus ye see with what gladness the ministers of the gospel ought to be received; ye see how our Saviour Christ, the high priest of our profession, was thus received, when, towards his passion, he came down from the mount of Olives unto Jerusalem; ye see how the disciples and apostles of our Saviour Christ were thus received, even with great joy of all the brethren. And thus at this day the ministers of the gospel are received, even with all gladness of all the brethren. But as then it was, so now it is, the multitude of the brethren [is] no great multitude, as may easily appear even by this one note, that the multitude of them that receive the ministers of the gospel with all gladness is no great multitude. Well, beloved, to stand no longer upon this point, I cannot better exhort you touching this point than out of these words of the apostle, 'Receive the ministers of Christ his gospel in the Lord, receive them with all gladness, and make much of them;' for so it followeth.

And make much of such. In which words the apostle brings it to the general which before he had spoken in the particular, and tells them how he would have them to receive, not only Epaphroditus in particular, but the ministers of the gospel in general.

'Make much of such,' make much account of them, have them in high honour and estimation; for so the word here used in the original signifieth, ἐπιμονής ἔχετε. But whom must we have in such honour? Make much of *such*; such as Epaphroditus, such as faithfully and painfully work in the Lord his harvest, such as carefully watch for our souls, as they that must give accounts, such as labour in the word and doctrine; make much of them, and account them worthy of double honour.

Here, then, we are taught in what account we are to have such ministers of the gospel as faithfully and painfully labour in the word and doctrine. We are to make much of them, we are to have them in high honour and estimation, we are to account them worthy of double honour; for so the apostle elsewhere also telleth us, saying, 1 Tim. v. 17, 'The elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, especially they which labour in the word and doctrine.' Where, whatsoever be meant by double honour in particular, in general it is meant, that all honour is due unto them that labour in the word and doctrine. Yea, indeed? Honour such? Make much of such, such find-faults, such troublers of the state, such hot-headed fellows, such discoverers of their fathers' shame, such publishers of whatsoever they know, even in Gath and Ashkelon? For thus commonly they are accounted of, especially if according to the necessity of the times they lift up their voices like trumpets, and shew the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. If they tell Herod of his incest, they may do it without that danger that John did; but let them look for no less than to be counted troublers of all Israel, as Elias was accounted by Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 17. If Demetrius, and the craftsmen with him, be like to sustain any loss by their preaching, Acts xix. 25; if the godless atheist, or the superstitious papist, think themselves galled by their preaching, then they traduce them by such and such names, and then they raise up whatsoever troubles possibly they can against them. Thus are they rewarded with evil for good, and with hatred for their good will; thus do they become enemies because they tell the truth; thus are they honoured and accounted of the world; thus commonly are they made of in the world, that are careful not to do the work of the Lord negligently. Yea, and see the strangeness of it. The cause why we should make much of the ministers of the gospel is, for the message' sake which they bring unto us, because they bring unto us the holy word of life, the manna and food of our souls; and because out of it they both teach us that truth which we are to believe and embrace, and improve those errors which we are to beware and avoid, and correct those faults in our life which we are to fly and detest, and instruct us in that way of righteousness wherein we are to walk all the days of our life. This, I say, is the cause why we should make much of them, and this is the very

cause why we cannot away with them. It would best of all please a great many of us that they should hold their peace, and spare themselves, and suffer us to sleep in our sins. Others of us haply can away with it that they should teach, and instruct, and exhort, and speak to the ear; but that there should be amongst the disciples of Christ sons of thunder, that the ministers of the gospel should pour into the wound both oil and vinegar, that they should improve and rebuke, *that* a great many of us cannot away with, and therefore when they do so, we break out into terms at our pleasure against them. Well, he that will be soundly healed, he must suffer both oil and vinegar to be poured into his wounds; and he that will live must suffer himself to be awaked out of his dead sleep of sin; and he that will shew himself to have profited in the school of Christ, must make much of such as both teach, and improve, and correct, and instruct, as the glory of God, and the good of his people, doth require. As for those that are not such, I say now no more, but I wish they were such, and that they would study to be such.

Beloved, I have urged this point, touching the ministers of the gospel, of receiving them in the Lord, of receiving them with all gladness, of making much of them, partly the last day, and partly this day, for your sakes, that ye might know how to use the ministers of the word, that so ye may give testimony how ye honour the word; for as men like or mislike the ministers of the word, so commonly they are affected towards the word. Let the word of Christ, therefore, dwell in you plenteously; let your delight be in the law of the Lord, and love the word of life as your life; and for a proof thereof, such as faithfully and painfully labour in the word and doctrine, receive them in the Lord, receive them with all gladness, and make much of such. It followeth.

Because that for the work of Christ, &c. This is the reason which the apostle bringeth why the Philippians should receive their minister in the Lord, and with all gladness. The reason, then, briefly is this: Epaphroditus was near unto death for the work of Christ, and regarded not his life to fulfil that service, &c.; therefore ye ought to receive him in the Lord, and with all gladness. By the work of Christ, the apostle meaneth in this place that whole pains and labour which Epaphroditus took in coming to him to Rome, in bringing with him that relief which the Philippians sent unto him, and in ministering unto him in prison such things as he wanted: a service well called the work of Christ, because commanded by Christ, and performed to the servant of Christ, for Christ his sake. Again, in that the apostle in the end of the verse saith, 'to fulfil that service,' &c., the apostle his meaning is not thereby to note any fault in the Philippians, as if they had been any way wanting unto him; but therein he commendeth Epaphroditus his faithful and painful performance of that

service, which they, if they had been present with him, would have done, but now could not because of their far distance from him. The whole reason is indeed drawn from the commendation of Epaphroditus. His commendation is, that he took such pains with him, and for him, that it had been like to have cost him his life; and that he made not so much reckoning of his life as he did of discharging that trust that was reposed in him, and performing that service which the Philippians themselves would have done if they had been present. This, I say, is the commendation which the apostle here giveth him, and for this cause he willeth them to receive him in the Lord with gladness.

Whence I gather this general observation, that it is a very commendable thing in the servants of Christ not to regard their lives unto the death, but to hazard their lives for the work of Christ, which either Christ hath commanded them to do in their place whatsoever, or which for Christ his sake they are to perform unto any servant of Christ. What thing more commendable or memorable in Esther, than that when the king's decree was passed against the Jews, 'to root out, to kill, and to destroy all the Jews, both young and old, children and women, in one day,' Est. iii. 13, she put her life in present danger to deliver her people? chap. v. 1. For it was a matter of death by the law 'for one not called to come into the inner court unto the king,' chap. iv. 11; yet for this work of God, the deliverance of his church from the devouring sword, she put her life in most imminent danger, and 'went in into the king, which was not according to the law,' ver. 16. We see it likewise registered unto the view of all posterity touching the apostles, that 'their lives were not dear unto them, so that they might fulfil their course with joy;' that they were 'ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus;' that howsoever they were threatened, yet they would not cease to preach in the name of Christ Jesus. And whilst this epistle shall be read, Epaphroditus his praise shall not die, for hazarding his life for the work of Christ, in relieving Paul his necessity when he was in prison, and ministering unto him such things as he wanted. Yea, and what if we should not only hazard our lives, but give up our lives for any work of Christ? Have we not a sure promise? 'He that loseth his life for my sake,' saith our Saviour, Mat. x. 39, 'shall save it.' If, therefore, Elias, or any of the poor children of God, be an hungered, 1 Kings xvii., and want to satisfy their hunger, though we have but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse for ourselves and for our family, and although we have no more hope of sustenance but even to die when that is spent and eaten, yet let us, with that good widow of Sarepta, strain and hazard ourselves that they may be somewhat relieved. If Paul or any godly brother in Christ be in prison, though our watchings, and care, and pains, and tra-

vail with them and for them be not without manifest danger of our health, and haply of our life, yet let us, with godly Epaphroditus, by all these hazard ourselves and our lives for their good, and such things as may be needful for them. If any brother be sick, though it be with some danger, let us visit him, and comfort him. If for the work of our ministry we be so pressed, that in ourselves we receive the sentence of death, as our holy apostle was often pressed, yet let us not shrink, but let us declare unto the people all the words of the Lord, and speak of all the judgments of his mouth. In a word, in whatsoever work of Christ (for I do not now speak of this work alone here mentioned), but in whatsoever work of Christ which he hath commanded us in our places to do, or which being due for his sake he accounteth as done for himself, let us be bold in the Lord; let not our lives be dearer unto us than the performance of his will, but let us hazard our lives for the work of Christ.

But here the doubt may be made, and the question demanded, whether we are always to hazard our lives for the work of Christ, whether in some work of Christ we may not sometimes withdraw ourselves from danger, and provide for our health and for our lives? As, for example, whether we may not forbear the visiting of the sick, when the sickness is pestilential and contagious; whether in such times we may not provide for our health and for our lives? The question, I know, is hard, and the doubt not easily answered, neither will I take upon me the decision of the doubt; only I shew my opinion, and willingly submit it to the judgment of others. Touching private men therefore, I mean such as whose place and office doth not necessarily require a more public care than of themselves and of their own family, they may, in my judgment, spare themselves, and not hazard their health or their lives, but for the time withdraw themselves from the danger, especially if such reasonable order be taken for the sick, as that by coming unto them they may more endanger themselves and others than do them good. My reasons are these: 1. By the law of Moses, Lev. xiii. 46, we see that those that were troubled with any contagious disease, as with the leprosy, they were commanded to dwell apart, and to have their habitation without the camp, and in places where they came to cry, 'I am unclean, I am unclean,' which doth plainly shew that all were not to come unto them, but both they were to give warning unto others, and others were to take warning by them, lest haply they should be infected by them if they should come unto them. Again, howsoever in such cases we could be content to hazard ourselves and our own lives, yet may we, and we ought to have, care over our own household, and over that charge that is committed to us. 'For if there be any,' saith the apostle, 1 Tim. v. 8, 'that provideth not for his own, and namely for them of his household, he denieth the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' We must then

provide for our own, as for their wealth in good sort, and things necessary to this life, so for their health, and therefore avoid such occasions as whereby we might bring their health in danger. Again, we have many examples in the holy Scripture, of that great Elias, of our Saviour Christ Jesus, of the blessed apostles, and of many others that did for the time avoid such dangers as otherwise would have overtaken them, and did not always think it meet to hazard themselves in every occurrent danger. Which reason I do the rather in this place bring, because if they might, then much more private men sometimes may for the time withdraw themselves from danger.

Now, if here it be objected and said, that avoiding of sickness and other dangers is an argument of distrust in God, and therefore we may not withdraw ourselves in such times, I answer, that it is no sure argument. The wicked, indeed, withdraw themselves in such times of danger, because they distrust in God, and think that God either cannot or will not help them and deliver them from the danger; and such avoiding of sickness or other danger is wicked and ungodly. The children of God therefore withdraw themselves, because they know that it is lawful to use such remedies against dangers as are lawful and good, and such avoiding is lawful. Again, if it be said that to avoid at such times is to no purpose, because God hath certainly decreed whom to take and whom to leave at such times, and none but they alone shall die, I answer, that in like sort it may be said, that it was to no purpose for Jacob to send into Egypt to buy corn, because God had certainly decreed to save him and his family from the famine; and likewise to no purpose that Paul should keep the mariners from flying out of the ship by boat, Acts xxvii. 31, lest all should perish, because God had decreed to save all them that sailed with them. And yet we see that both Jacob sent into Egypt, and Paul caused the soldiers to cut off the ropes of the boat, both using such means as God had ordained whereby to bring his will to pass, and therein leaving us an example to do the same. Again, if it be said that it is a scandal so to withdraw ourselves, I answer that it is a scandal taken, not given. Again, if it be said that whereas we should love our neighbours as ourselves, thus we do forsake them, and so leave the rule of love and charity, I answer, that to leave them for a time, when there are either some of their friends, or some others provided for the nonce to look unto them, is not to forsake them, neither is against the rule of love and charity. Nay, it were very preposterous love and charity to be devoted unto this or that private friend, as by that occasion to bring in danger a whole family or charge whatsoever, committed unto them. Neither do I know anything which can be brought to cross that which hath been said touching private men's avoiding of dangers which may not as easily be answered.

Now, touching public men, magistrates and ministers, the doubt is somewhat more difficult. To instance in ministers, to shew mine opinion in brief; in my judgment, the ministers are first and principally to look unto the good of the whole church, and then unto the good of every particular member thereof. If there be many ministers of one church, some one by lot or common consent may be deputed to regard the sick, and the rest may avoid the danger; but if there be but one, he is so to be careful for the sick, as that the rest of the church may not be deprived of his ministry. He may and must comfort the sick, and go unto them in such sort, and so near as he well can without danger; and again, he may and must avoid manifest danger for the good of the rest of the church, so much as he can without impiety. Neither may too much fear withdraw him too much from danger, neither through too much boldness may he thrust himself into danger; for by too much fear, he is more slow to the work of Christ than he should be, and by too much boldness, he more endangereth both himself and the church than he should. To conclude the whole point therefore; howsoever it be most true that it is a very commendable thing in the servants of Jesus Christ to hazard their lives, as Epaphroditus did, for the work of Christ, yet sometimes both private and also public men may withdraw themselves from danger, in such sort as already hath been shewed.

Another particular observation hence I gather, which is this, that relieving them that are in bonds and in prison, and ministering unto the necessities of God's saints upon earth, is a work of Christ; for so the apostle in this place, as we see, calleth it. It is, I say, a work of Christ; such a one as he commandeth, and loveth, and rewardeth. 'Remember them that are in bonds,' saith the Holy Ghost by the apostle, Heb. xiii. 3, 'as though ye were bound with them; and them that are in affliction, as if ye were also afflicted in the body.' And to Timothy the apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'Charge them that are rich in the world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation,' &c. Again, how the Holy Ghost loveth this work may appear by that of Paul, where he saith, 2 Tim. i. 16, 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain,' &c.; and by that where the apostle saith, Heb. xiii. 16, 'To do good and to distribute forget not: for with such sacrifices God is pleased.' Again, how Christ rewardeth this work we see in the gospel, where, setting the sentence of the last judgment, he saith, Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' &c. Contrariwise, how the Lord hateth the neglect of this duty of ministering unto the necessities of his poor saints on earth, we may see both by the example of that churlish Nabal, of whose badness this is especially registered as most hateful unto the Lord, that he would not relieve the

necessities of David being in distress, 1 Sam. xxv. 10, but sent away his servant's with crooked and churlish answers; and likewise by the example of the rich man in the gospel, of whom likewise this is specially registered as most hateful unto the Lord, Luke xvi. 19, that when Lazarus lay at his gate full of sores, and desired to be refreshed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, the dogs came unto him, and did more for him than the rich man would do; and likewise by the testimony of John, where he saith, 1 John iii. 17, 'Whosoever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' As if the apostle should have said, Whatsoever show this man makes, the love of God dwells not in him; neither he loveth God, nor God loveth him. Men and brethren, what should more stir you up unto this holy work of relieving of God's poor saints, a thing so needful now to be urged and pressed, what (I say) should more stir you up unto it than this which hath already been said? It is a work of Christ, which Christ commandeth, which he loveth and liketh, which Christ highly rewardeth,

and unmercifulness to the poor he hateth and detesteth. As every man, therefore, wisheth in his heart, so let him give unto the poor saints; 'not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver,' 2 Cor. ix. 7. If it be a work of Christ, it well beseemeth thee if thou be a Christian; if he have commanded it, it stands thee upon to obey it; if he love and like it, thou hast great cause to move thee to it; if for his mercy's sake he reward it, thou hast great reason to be occupied in it; and if he so hate the neglect of it, it behoveth thee not to be negligent in it. As therefore every man hath received of the Lord, so let him be ready to give according to that he hath. 'He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and the Lord will recompense him that which he hath given,' Prov. xix. 17. And 'blessed is he,' saith David, Ps. xli. 1, 'that considereth the poor and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.' Consider what I say, and the Lord give you a right understanding in all things, and fill your hearts full of all knowledge, that ye may abound in every good unto the glory of God the Father, to whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, &c.

LAUS OMNIS SOLI DEO.

LECTURE XLVIII.

Moreover, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. It griereth me not to write the same things unto you, and for you it is sure, &c.—PHILIP. III. 1, 2.

THE holy apostle having in the first chapter of this epistle, first signified his good mind towards the Philippians by retaining them in perfect memory, by his longing after them all from the very heart-root in Jesus Christ, and by his praying for them; and having afterward exhorted them that they should not shrink from his imprisonment, because thereby the gospel was confirmed and not diminished; in the second chapter, as we have heard, he first exhorted them unto humility, that putting apart all contention and vain-glory, they would have even the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, who being God, humbled himself to be man, and became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross, and was therefore highly exalted, &c. 2. Having grounded certain exhortations upon that example of Christ his humility and obedience, as (1) that they would run forward in that race of righteousness wherein God had freely placed them through Jesus Christ, making an end of their salvation with fear and trembling; and then that they would do all things with their neighbours without murmuring and reasonings, that they might be blameless and pure, and the sons of God, &c. The apostle, I say, having grounded these exhortations upon that example of Christ his humility and obedience, (2) for their comfort and confirmation against certain false apostles crept in amongst them, he both promised to

send Timothy shortly unto them, and likewise that himself would shortly after that come unto them, and besides sent their minister, Epaphroditus, presently unto them. Now in this third chapter the apostle instructeth the Philippians in the things wherein the false apostles laboured to seduce them, and so armeth the Philippians against them till his coming unto them, by confuting that false doctrine which they delivered. The doctrine which the false apostles delivered was, that not Christ alone, and faith in his name, but circumcision also, and the works of the law, were necessary unto justification and salvation; which doctrine the apostle doth at large confute in the Epistle to the Galatians, because they had suffered themselves to be seduced and bewitched by it. But here, because the Philippians had manfully withheld and given it no place amongst them, the apostle very briefly confuteth it, and proveth that our righteousness is only by Christ, and faith in his name, not at all by the works of the law. The principal parts of this chapter are three: 1. He exhorteth them to beware of false teachers, ver. 2, and instrucneteth them in that truth which the false apostles gainsay, ver. 3. 2. The apostle proposeth himself as an embracer of that truth touching man's righteousness which they were to embrace, ver. 4-15. Lastly, he exhorteth them to embrace and hold fast the same truth with him, and

to walk as they have him for an ensample, from ver. 15 to the end of the chapter. Now before he come to the handling of any of these principal parts, 1, he setteth down this exhortation, 'Rejoice in the Lord,' as a conclusion of that which went before, and as a ground of that which followeth; 2, he excuseth himself for writing now the same things by epistle which before he had taught them by word of mouth. That the exhortation is set down partly by way of conclusion of that which he had spoken before, may appear by the entrance unto it, in that he saith, 'Moreover,' &c. For it is as if the apostle had thus said, Hitherto ye have been full of heaviness, partly for my bonds and imprisonment, and partly for Epaphroditus your minister his sickness. Now for my bonds, they, as I have told you, Philip. i. 12-14, have turned rather to the furthering of the gospel, inasmuch as many of the brethren in the Lord are boldened through my bonds to speak the word, and now so it is that I am in good hope shortly to be delivered from my bonds, and to come unto you. Again, for Epaphroditus, God hath had mercy upon him, and now he is returned unto you in good and perfect health. What therefore now remaineth, my brethren, but that ye be glad and rejoice in the Lord, I say, whom before I have described unto you, in that Lord, who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, &c. Rejoice, for that there is no other cause but that ye should rejoice, but rejoice in the Lord, who became man for you, died for your sins, rose again for your justification, sitteth at the right hand of God to make request for you, unto whom every knee in that day shall bow, and confess that he is the Lord, rejoice in him. Again, it is partly set down as a ground of that which followeth, as if the apostle should thus have said, I have already as in a glass presented unto your view 'the great mystery of godliness, even God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. He it is, and he alone it is, that is made of God unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that he that rejoiceth might rejoice in him. Rejoice therefore in him, and beware of such as teach you to rejoice in anything but in him. Thus ye see how this exhortation is partly a conclusion of that which went before, and partly a ground and foundation of that which followeth. The excuse which followeth is to meet with that conceit which the Philippians haply might have upon his often admonition, first by word, and now by writing, to beware of false apostles. For thus the apostle thought they might conceive, and think with themselves: You have often when you were with us admonished us of false apostles and teachers; when you taught us and preached unto us Christ Jesus, you ceased not to warn us to beware of such as would seek

to seduce us from that truth which you taught us; and we have been diligent so to do, neither have we given place to any of their doctrines; and therefore you needed not to have troubled yourself; this admonition needed not to us. The apostle therefore, to meet with this, telleth them, that for him it is no grief or trouble to him at all to write the same things unto them which before he had taught them by word of mouth, and for them he telleth them that it is a sure and a safe thing that they be often admonished of false teachers, that so they may be the more wary of them. Thus much for the understanding of these words. Now before we proceed any farther, let us see what observations we may gather hence, for our use and instructiou.

The first thing which here I note is, the manner how the apostle doth exhort the Philippians, which is in most mild, and kind, and good sort, speaking unto them as unto his brethren, yea, calling them his brethren; not that they were his brethren naturally according to the flesh by carnal generation, but his brethren in Christ, begotten in one womb of the church, the spouse of Christ, unto one God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Father of us all, by one immortal seed, the word of God, through one Spirit whereinto we are all baptized, born by spiritual generation, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Exhorting, then, the Philippians whom he had begotten in the faith unto Christ by his ministry, he speaketh unto them as unto his brethren in Christ, most mildly, and kindly, and lovingly. So we see he doth in the second chapter and twelfth verse, where, exhorting them to humility and obedience, and to finish their salvation with fear and trembling, he speaketh thus unto them, 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed,' &c. So in the next chapter he joind both thes together, and a great deal more, and saith, 'Therefore, my brethren, my beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown,' &c.: most mild and loving exhortations. And wherefore useth he such mildness in his exhortations unto them? No doubt the rather to win them to hearken unto him, and unto that whereto he exhorteth them. For as sharp and bitter words often stir up strife and anger, so a soft tongue, mild and loving speeches, much avail to effect that which a man desires. Here, then, is a lesson for us whom God hath set apart unto the holy work of his ministry, that we should not only be careful to instruct them that hear us in the wholesome words of truth, but that in meekness also of spirit we should exhort them unto the things that belong unto their peace; a thing practised by Christ himself, and practised likewise by the apostles of Jesus Christ, as by many places in the New Testament it may easily appear. Here, then, haply, you will say unto me, How is it, then, that many of you are so sharp and eager in speech; how is it that ye follow not the practice of Christ and

of his apostles? We are, indeed, sometimes sharp; we come sometimes with a rod, as the apostle speaks, yea, sometimes we bring an axe with us, and lay it to the root of the tree to cut it down, that it may be cast into the fire; sometimes we pluck up, and root out, and throw down; sometimes we strike, and wound, and kill: and herein we follow the practice of Christ and of his apostles. Would it not seem a sharp speech unto you, if we should lift up our voices and cry, 'O generation of vipers, how can ye speak good things when ye are evil?' Mat. xii. 34; or if we should say, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,' John viii. 44; or if we should say, 'Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?' Luke xi. 40, 42, 43, &c.; or if we should come with woe upon woe unto such and such men. And yet, speaking thus, we should speak no otherwise than our Saviour Christ did. Did not the apostle likewise use sharp speeches unto the Galatians, when he said unto them, Gal. iii. 1, 3, 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? Are ye so foolish that, after ye have begun in the spirit, ye would now be made perfect by the flesh?' And did not James likewise use great sharpness and boldness of speech against rich men, saying, chap. v. 1-6, 'Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you,' &c.; 'ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and in wantonness; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter; ye have condemned and killed the just, and he hath not resisted you.' Therefore we be sometimes somewhat rough and sharp, ye see we do not therein swerve from the rule and practice of Christ or his apostles. 'To all things,' saith the preacher, Eccles. iii. 1, 3, 'there is an appointed time, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to slay, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build,' &c. So I say there is a time to be rough and sharp, and there is a time to be mild and gentle; there is a time to strike and wound, and there is a time to comfort and to heal. The same God that came in a soft and still voice unto Elias, 1 Kings xix. 12, and not in the earthquake, not in the fire, came unto Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in the earthquake, Num. xvi. 32, and unto Nadab and Abihu in the fire, Lev. x. 2, and the one sort were devoured by the earthquake, and the other sort by the fire. When men are hardened in sin, and will not be waked out of that dead sleep whereinto they are fallen; when men stop their ears at the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely, and will not hearken and obey; when men come to that height of impiety, that either they say with the fool in their hearts, There is no God, or else make the question whether there be knowledge in the Most High; when the fruits of ungodliness and unrighteousness, I say not, begin to shoot out their heads, and to shake their lips, but to swarm like the

grasshoppers in Egypt: then I trow it is a time to be sharp, to speak out of mount Sinai in thunder and in lightning, to denounce the threatenings of the law and the judgments of God's mouth against all ungodliness and iniquity, and to lay the axe unto the very root of the tree, to strike, and wound, and to kill sin if it be possible. Again, when the soul is afflicted and brought low through any plague or trouble, when the sorrowful heart shrinketh in the way and groaneth under the burden of his sin, when men begin to loathe and detest those wicked ways wherein they have walked, and to long and thirst after the things that belong unto their peace, then it is a time to come in the spirit of meekness, to speak comfortably unto the heart, to raise up them that are fallen with all kind speeches, and in all loving manner to lead them on along besides the water of comfort. As, therefore, the times do require, so we come, with a rod, or in the spirit of meekness, and because commonly in our congregations there be both some such as need to be wounded, and again some such as need to be healed, therefore it is that in our sermons we do both sharply reprove and mildly exhort. The sinner that goeth on in the wickedness of his way, and runneth headlong into many and noisome lusts, we sharply reprove, that we may reclaim him from the wickedness of his way, and that we may pull him as a brand out of the fire, lest he should perish in the day of Christ. But such as are grieved because they are out of the right way, and grope after it if haply they might find it, them we restore with the spirit of meekness, we pour oil into their wounds, with all mildness we exhort them, and we minister what word of comfort we can unto them. Nay, whatsoever sharpness at any time we do use, yet still we exhort you with all mildness, whether it be that we exhort you to continue in the grace wherein ye stand, and to hold fast your hope unto the end, or to turn from the wickedness of your way, and to make straight steps unto your feet, that that which is halting may be healed. And if the hearts of our people might be healed only by applying gentle medicines, without cutting and lancing their sores, only by pouring, supplying oil,* without pouring vinegar into their wounds, why should any man think that we would use sharpness of speech? Nay, it would be our soul's joy if our meditations for the things that we bring unto you might be wholly and only set and settled on the sweet comforts of the gospel, that all our speeches unto you might be of the mercies of God unto us in Christ Jesus. Our desire is to present you pure and blameless, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, in that day. Having this desire, if any of our sheep wander and go astray, bear with us if, with the Good Shepherd, we sometimes use the hook, nay, if sometimes we set our dog after them, and pinch them to bring them in again. But, above all things, have care that we may still

* Qu. 'pouring suppling oil'?—ED.

speak unto you as unto our brethren, sons of one father with us, children of one womb with us, baptized by one Spirit into one body with us, continuing in one fellowship of God's saints with us, and walking with us by one rule in the same way unto our country and city which is above, where Christ which is our Head hath taken possession for us. Let us walk and talk as brethren, and let us proceed by one rule, that we may mind one thing. And thus much of this observation. It followeth,

Rejoice in the Lord. We have spoken already of the manner of the apostle his exhortation. Now in these words I note the matter of his exhortation, which is to rejoice, but not so simply, but to rejoice in the Lord. The like exhortation the apostle also maketh in the next chapter, where he saith, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I say, Rejoice,' Philip. iv. 4. The like whereunto the apostle also in another place, 2 Cor. x. 17, maketh out of the prophet, Jer ix. 24, where he saith, 'Let him that rejoiceth, rejoice in the Lord.' In the epistle to the Thessalonians, he only saith, 1 Thes. v. 16, 'Rejoice evermore;' but the meaning is all one with that in the next chapter, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway.' Hence, then, we may observe what and wherein the Christian man's joy and rejoicing is and ought to be, in the Lord. To be glad, and to be merry, and to rejoice, is a thing which the heart of man very much, even naturally, desireth, so that there needeth no precept or exhortation at all that we should rejoice; but what and wherein our rejoicing should be, is a matter very well worthy our due and diligent consideration. Look abroad into the world and see. A man shall there see gladness of heart and rejoicing enough; but what and wherein? The rich and wealthy man, he rejoiceth and cheereth his heart in his wealth and riches, in his lands and possessions, in the glory of his house, and in the store that he hath; the strong man, he glorieth and rejoiceth in his strength; the wise man, in his wisdom; the great and honourable man, in his greatness and in his honour; the wanton, in his pleasures; the riotous person, in his riotousness; and generally, the wicked man in his wickedness. Nay, is it not with us, as it was in the days of the prophet Isaiah, with Jerusalem? Isa. xxii. 12, 13, 'In the day that the Lord God of Hosts calls unto weeping, and mourning, and to baldness, and girding with sackcloth,' is there not 'joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine, eating and drinking, for to-morrow we die'? Do we not, as the prophet Amos speaketh, chap. vi. 3-6, in this day wherein God's judgments lie so heavy upon us, and upon our whole land, do we not, I say, 'put far from us the evil day, and approach to the seat of iniquity, lying upon beds of ivory, and stretching ourselves upon our beds, eating the lambs of the flocks, and the calves out of the stall, singing to the sound of the viol, drinking wine in bowls, and anointing ourselves with the chief oint-

ments, but no man almost remembering the affliction of Joseph'? Yes, surely everywhere, almost, we may see some men following their wonted pleasures, and rejoicing themselves in their wonted delights, as if the hand of the Lord were not upon us. But such carnal and worldly rejoicing is not good. Nay, unto such as thus rejoice, fixing their only joy and delight on the things of this world, and on the vanities of this life, our Saviour Christ pronounceth a woe, saying, Luke vi. 25, 'Woe be to you that now laugh, for ye shall wail and weep.' This is the fearful judgment of God upon them that rejoice in the flesh, and not in the spirit. Understand, therefore, that there is a twofold joy and rejoicing: one in the flesh, another in the spirit; one carnal and sensual, another spiritual and Christian; one in the world, another in the Lord. The carnal and worldly rejoicing is, when putting far from us the remembrance of the evil day, we rejoice more in the pleasures of sin and the transitory things of this world than we do in the things that belong unto our peace. Such was the rejoicing of him, Luke xii. 18, 19, that when he had pulled down his barns, and builded greater, and therein laid all his fruits and his goods, said unto his soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, live at ease, eat, drink, and take thy pastime.' And such is the rejoicing of men commonly at this day, as already hath been noted. And true it is which Solomon saith, Prov. xv. 21, 'Foolishness is joy to him that is destitute of understanding;' that is, even wickedness and sin is a matter of mirth and delight to the wicked and ungodly man. But it is as true which Zophar saith, Job xx. 5, that 'the rejoicing of the wicked is short, and that the joy of hypocrites is but a moment.'

Besides this carnal and worldly rejoicing, there is also a Christian and spiritual rejoicing, which is, when setting our hearts on the Lord as on our chiefest good, we so rejoice in the things of this life, as that we count them all less and dung in comparison of that rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus. When remembering the merciful goodness and loving-kindness of our good God, nothing can so much daunt us but that our heart danceth for joy, and our souls are ravished with rejoicing therat. Wilt thou, then, rejoice, or know how and wherein to rejoice, O man that fearest the Lord? Rejoice in the Lord; rejoice in those spiritual blessings wherewithal God hath blessed thee in heavenly things in Christ Jesus; rejoice in thine election in Christ Jesus unto eternal life before the foundation of the world; rejoice in the workmanship of thy creation after God's own image; in thy redemption by the blood of Christ Jesus, when through disobedience thou hadst for ever cast thyself away; in thine adoption through Jesus Christ into the number of the sons of God; in thy reconciliation with God the Father by the intercession and mediation of Christ Jesus; in thy vocation unto the knowledge of the truth by the gospel of Christ Jesus; in

thine incorporation into the mystical body of Christ Jesus by the powerful operation of the Spirit; in thy justification, and free forgiveness of thy sins by faith in the blood of Christ Jesus; in thy sanctification by the Spirit of grace unto some measure of holiness and righteousness in this life; in thy regeneration unto a lively hope in Christ Jesus, and in the assured confidence of thy glorification after this life with Jesus, who shall change thy vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, &c. Herein is the Christian man's rejoicing, and here is matter of rejoicing indeed. All rejoicing in all things in the world whatsoever, what is it in comparison of this rejoicing? Surely, as even now we heard out of Job, it is short, and but a moment. Nay, I say more. Whatsoever men imagine with themselves, yet indeed there is no true joy, no sound rejoicing, but this rejoicing in the Lord. Other joys in other things may haply for the time somewhat affect us, and please our fancies, and tickle our outward senses, and delight our outward man; but that that warms the heart, that that cheers the soul, that that makes the inner man to pant and to leap for joy, that is the joy in the Holy Ghost, and rejoicing in the Lord. And this is it which sticks by a man in his life, and in his death forsakes him not. Yea, when, in the throes and pangs of death, he shall say of all other joys whatsoever, I have no pleasure in them, then in this joy his soul shall rejoice, through this joy he shall joyfully wrestle with death, and because of this joy he shall not fear death, nor the grave, but desire to be loosed and to be with Christ. Let the carnal, and worldly, and sensual men, therefore, brag and boast as much as they will, that they lead the only joyful and pleasant lives, and let them object unto the godly Christian as much as they will, a lumpish, and momish, and sour life, wherein he hath no joy or pleasure at all; yet shall the day come when they shall change their minds, and sigh for grief of mind, and say within themselves, These are they whom sometimes we had in derision, and in a parable of reproach. We fools thought we had the world at will, and thought their life madness; but how are they counted among the children of God, and their portion is among the saints!* Thus, I say, shall they say when they shall perceive that the life which they thought the only joyful life, was indeed the most miserable life. So that when the count is indeed truly cast, we shall find that only the true Christian hath sound joy of heart, and that there is no sound rejoicing but this rejoicing in the Lord.

Yea, but how shall we know this, that indeed we do rejoice in the Lord? For we are inclined naturally to flatter ourselves, and we will say that we rejoice in the Lord, and perhaps think so too, when indeed we do not. How then shall we know that we do truly rejoice in the Lord? The wicked indeed, whose hearts are set on other pleasures, wherein no true joys are to be

* Wisdom, v. 3.

found, they know not what it meaneth, yea, it seemeth mere madness and foolishness unto them. But for us, thus we shall know that we rejoice in the Lord, in whom alone true joys are to be found. 1. Consider and see what longing and thirsting there is in thee after the hearing, and reading, and meditating in the holy word of life; what comfort and peace of conscience thy soul findest in the holy word of life; how thy heart is enlarged when thou hearest or readest the sweet promises of God in Christ Jesus; what a gladness unto thy soul it is that Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; how steadfastly thou cleavest in thy heart unto thy God, and how soul-ravished thou art with the love of thy Christ by meditation in the word: consider, I say, and see these things, and hereby thou shalt see whether thou dost truly rejoice in the Lord. 'These things,' saith our Saviour Christ, John xv. 11, 'I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' If, then, thus we be affected toward the word of Christ, that we long and thirst thereafter, even as the chased hart after the water brooks; if we find in it such peace and comfort, and contentation of soul; if through it we believe in Christ, though we see him not, and in his promises; if we love him, and rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and glorious: this is a certain effect, and so a sure proof of our rejoicing in the Lord. Nay, if we have a good measure of this rejoicing in and through the word, though not such complement as we have spoken of, yet even this is a sure argument of our rejoicing in the Lord; for then alone shall this rejoicing be fully perfect, when we shall see him face to face, and when we shall know even as we are known, not in part only.

Another effect of this rejoicing in the Lord is, that it causeth us to rejoice in tribulations, in afflictions, in temptations, even in death, and in the pangs and pains thereof. Consider, then, and see how thou art affected in the day of thy trouble; what comfort thou findest in thy soul, when in the world thou dost suffer afflictions; what joy thou findest in thine inner man, when thine outward man is compassed about with sorrows: consider, I say, and see these things, and thereby thou shalt also see whether indeed, and truly, thou dost rejoice in the Lord; for as the apostle saith, Rom. v. 3, by Christ we rejoice in tribulations, 'knowing that tribulation bringeth forth patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.' If, then, when we suffer afflictions in the world, we can be of good comfort because our Christ hath overcome the world; if when we are reviled and persecuted, and all manner of evil words are spoken against us falsely for Christ his sake, we can rejoice and be glad for that reward that is laid up for us in heaven; if in the sorrows of death we can patiently wait for the Lord, and gladly desire to be loosed and to be with Christ: this is a certain effect,

and so a sure proof of our rejoicing in the Lord ; for therefore are we not overcome of sorrows in the midst of troublcs, because of that our rejoicing in the Lord which is within us, and which no man can take from us. A third effect of this rejoicing in the Lord is, that it causeth us to count all things loss and dung in comparison of Christ, so that we seize him and possess him not of a part alone of our rejoicing, but of our whole rejoicing, which is the effect spoken of in this chapter, as hereafter we shall perceive. Consider, then, and see whether thy rejoicing be entire in thy Christ, whether thou canst find any sound joy but in thy Christ, whether thou stand so fast as that nothing shall take away any part of thy rejoicing in thy Christ, and give it to any other ; consider, I say, and see these things, and thereby also thou shalt see whether thou rejoicest truly in the Lord. When many of Christ his disciples went back, ' he said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ? Then Simon Peter answered him, Master, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life,' John vi. 67, 68. If

then we, whosoever, rejoice in other things, yet we rejoice in Christ Jesus, if we cleave stedfastly unto him, knowing that there is no sound joy without him, if we make him both the descent and the ditty of our song, and the whole matter of our rejoicing, this is also a certain effect and sure proof of our rejoicing in the Lord ; for by our rejoicing in him, we die unto all other joys, knowing that there is no sound joy but in him.

Let us remember what great things he hath done for us, and what cause we have to rejoice in his holy name. He that gave him to us, and him to death for us, he hath together with him given us all things also. Let us therefore rejoice in him, and let our rejoicing in him shew itself by our rejoicing in and through the word, by our rejoicing in all our tribulations and afflictions, and by dying unto all other joys which are without him. In him is sound joy, and in him is all joy : if we believe in him, we will rejoice in him ; if we rejoice in him, we shall not fear death, but when death comes, we shall desire to be loosed and to be with Christ.

LECTURE XLIX.

It grieveth me not to write the same things unto you, and for you it is a safe thing. Beware of dogs, beware, &c.

—PHILIP. III. 1, 2.

IT grieveth me not, &c. The apostle thought that thus the Philippians might conceive and think with themselves : When you were with us and taught us, and preached unto us Christ Jesus, you ceased not to warn us of false teachers, such as would seek to seduce us from that truth which you taught us, and we have been diligent so to do, neither have we given place to any of their doctrines ; and therefore you needed not to have troubled yourself, this admonition needed not to us. In these words therefore the apostle meeteth with this, and excuseth the matter, and calleth them, that for him it was no grief or trouble at all to him to write the same things unto them which before he had taught them by word of mouth ; and for them he calleth them that it was a sure and safe thing for them to be often admonished of false teachers, that so they might be the more wary of them. Now, before we proceed any further, let us see what observations we may gather hence for our use and instruction.

1. In that the apostle beats so often upon that which he thought was so good, and so profitable for them to hear, urging and pressing even the self same things both by word and also by writing ; henco we that are ministers of the gospel may learn this lesson, not to be grieved to teach them that hear us often the same things, but as we perceive the things whereof we speak to be good and profitable to them that hear us, so to go over them, and over them, and not to leave them till they make some good impression in them. There must be ' precept upon precept,' as the prophet speaketh, Isa. xxviii. 10, ' Precept upon precept ; line

unto line, line unto line ; there a little, and there a little : ' we must tell them one thing oftentimes, and beat upon the same thing so long, till at length they may catch some hold of it. For that which we commonly say, a good tale may be twice or thrice told, is most true in this work of the minister, where that can never be too much taught, which can never be too well learned. And as we have our apostle Paul for a notable example herein to imitate, so have we Moses, and the prophets, and other of the apostles likewise. In Moses, the passover, the heavenly manna, the rock in the wilderness, the brazen serpent, those manifold ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, what were they else but so many repetitions as it were, and ingeminations, of one and the same lesson to be learned by the Jews touching Christ Jesus, that Lamb of God whom alone they did all prefigure ? Look likewise into all the prophets, and see what all of them say in all their prophecies, and what each of them say in their several prophecies. Do not all the prophets, in all their prophecies, beat wonderfully much upon these two points, the cursed idolatry of the Jews, and their vain confidence in man and in the arm of flesh ? And do not each of them in their several prophecies, Isaiah in his prophecy, Jeremiah in his prophecy, &c., very often and much beat upon these very points, urging them and pressing them, sometimes by threatenings, and sometimes by promises, as if they would never give over till they should beat the consideration of these things into their brains. ' I have protested,' saith the Lord by his prophet,

Jer. xi. 7, 8, ‘unto your fathers, when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice ; nevertheless they would not obey, nor incline their ear,’ &c. And again by the same prophet he saith, chap. xxxv. 15, ‘I have sent you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return now every man from his evil way, and amend your works, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given unto you and to your fathers : but ye would not incline your ear, nor obey me ;’ whereby it doth appear that all the Lord his servants, even all his prophets, were sent always almost with one lesson unto the rebellious people of the Jews. So likewise the apostle Peter, 2 Peter i. 12, ‘Though,’ saith he, ‘ye have knowledge, and be stablished in the present truth,—he meaneth the truth which he then presently delivered unto them,—yet,’ saith he, ‘I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things,’ he meaneth the same things whereof then he put them in mind. Whereby he signifieth that men even well grounded and well stablished in the truth cannot be too often told, and too much put in mind of such things as are good and profitable for their use and instruction. Have we such patterns as Moses, and the prophets, and the apostles for imitation in this point ? Let us then, when we fall upon a point good and profitable for them that hear us, let us, I say, press it, and beat upon it, let us come to it again and again, and let us not give it over, till we have made (if it be possible), some impression of it.

Yea, but this will be too, too tedious and wearisome unto our auditory, so often to be plodding upon one thing, so much to be pressing the same thing, he it never so good ; they must be delighted with variety, and great diversity of matter, or else they will be quickly weary in hearing of us. Here it is indeed ; so dainty are the ears of our auditory that they cannot away with it to hear the same thing so often ; they must have novelties ; they must have variety of matter, though when they have heard they cannot make any account of that they have heard. Yea, to such daintiness is our auditory grown, that if we feed them only with manna, Num. xi. 5, only with the holy word of life, the heavenly food of our souls, they will quickly grow to loathe it, and to long and greedily to lust after such fish and flesh as they were wont to have even in Egypt ; nay, if they may have but ceneumbers and pippins, and leeks, and onions, and garlie, such as they had in Egypt, they had rather have it than still to feed upon this dry manna ; so irksome are the same things unto our auditory, be they never so good, and so desirous are they to hear divers things, though nothing so good and profitable unto them. In regard therefore of them, we must not so often speak of the same things, because they like it not, as not either needful or not profitable for them. Hear, then, I beseech you, what our holy apostle saith for your

instruction in this point : ‘For you,’ saith he, ‘it is a sure thing, a safe and good course for you, that ye be often told of the same things.’ See, then, the odds between your conceit and the apostle his resolution. To hear often of the same things is a tedious thing to you ; but the apostle thinketh it a very sure and safe thing for you. You must always have variety, and that ye think best for you ; but the apostle thinketh it good for you to be often put in mind of the same things. The reasons why it is good for you often to hear the same things are these : (1.) By hearing the same things often, your dull and unexpert understandings are much holpen ; for thus the things which haply at the first seemed hard to be understood, and which you were not able to comprehend and conceive, do afterwards become plain and easy unto you ; and this is the reason why sometimes we do so long stand a-teaching the same lesson unto them that are young scholars in the doctrine of faith, and inexpert in the word of righteousness. (2.) By hearing the same things often, you are stirred up both unto greater carefulness, and likewise unto greater wariness than otherwise haply ye would ; for if the things be such as you should learn and follow after, ye will quickly see that they must concern you, because they are so often beaten upon, and therefore ye will be careful to lay them up in your hearts, and to practise them in your lives ; and this was the reason why the apostle Peter was so diligent to put them, unto whom he wrote, in mind of the same things, even that the more diligent they saw him to put them in mind of the same things, they might be the more careful to hearken to those things whereof he so often put them in mind. Again, if the things be such as you should beware and avoid, this often speaking of them will make you the more wary of them, because ye will easily conjecture that surely the danger is great when the caveats are so often and so carefully given. And this was the reason why our apostle, first when he was with them by word of mouth, and now again by writing, ceased not to warn the Philippians of false teachers, even that the more careful they saw the apostle to give them warning of false teachers, they might be so much the more wary of them. As, then, it ought not to grieve us to speak the same things often unto you, so let it not be wearisome unto you to hear the same things often of us. You see the apostle saith it is a sure thing, and a good thing for you, and ye hear the reasons why it is good for you ; let this suffice to moderate that over great nice ness and daintiness that is in some, and that such an over-itching humour that is in some after variety, that they cannot at all away with it to hear the same things often. When the things are of necessary moment and behoof for you, let it not be tedious unto you to hear of them again and again ; and when things are so carefully and so often suggested unto you, above all things take heed that ye hearken unto the things so suggested, lest that come upon you which

is mentioned in the place of Isaiah before alleged, that is, lest when there had been ‘ precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line unto line, line unto line, there a little, and there a little,’ and yet ye would not hear, afterwards it come to pass by the just judgment of God, that there be precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line unto line, line unto line, there a little, and there a little ; but then, ‘ hearing you shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive.’ For it is a just thing with God, that if ye will not hear when the book of God is so wide opened unto you, and the same things so often gone over and over, afterwards the word be unto you as the words of a book that is sealed up, that is, altogether unprofitable, or else that it be quite taken from you and given unto them that will hearken and obey. Let it therefore neither grieve them that speak, to speak the same things often when they are good and profitable, neither let it seem tedious and wearisome unto you that hear, to hear the same things often when they are such ; and above all things, hearken unto such things so often suggested, lest the things so often spoken unto you turn unto your farther judgment. Now let us see what it was that the apostle thought it not amiss for himself so often to speak of, and a sure thing for them so often to hear of; it was the taking heed of false teachers, such as would seek to seduce them from that truth of Christ Jesus which he had taught them. And this is the exhortation or admonition which now followeth, after this excuse of the apostle for himself.

Beware of dogs, &c. This is the first principal part which we observed in this chapter, which, in brief, is an exhortation or admonition to beware of false teachers ; and especially the apostle giveth his *careat* of those false apostles which were then crept in amongst them, as the article used in the original doth shew, who taught that not Christ alone, and faith in his name, but circumcision also, and the works of the law, were necessary to justification and salvation. These false teachers, who taught this erroneous and false doctrine, the apostle here noteth by the name of dogs, of false teachers, and of the concision. He calleth them dogs in respect of certain bad qualities wherein they did resemble dogs : (1.) In respect of their snarling and barking, because as dogs they barked at him, and snarled at his doctrine, and that as much without reason as the dog that barks, not upon reason, but upon custom. And so we see Abishai called Shimei a dog, in respect of his causeless barking against David, 2 Sam. xvi. 9. (2.) In respect of their greediness, because as dogs they minded only their bellies, ‘ making,’ as afterwards he saith, ‘ their belly their god.’ And so we see the prophet called blind watchmen, and dumb dogs, greedy dogs, which could never have enough, Isa. lvi. 11. (3.) In respect of their absurdness, because, as the dog returneth to his vomit, so they of Jews made Christians returned again to their old Judaism, not teaching

Christ purely, but making a mixture of Judaism and Christianity. Again, he calleth them evil workers : (1.) In respect of the works which they urged, because by preaching the necessity of works unto salvation, and joining them with Christ as workers together with him of our salvation, they made those works which in themselves were not evil, evil works ; for those works which, as they are done according to the law, are good, by this addition of necessity, that not Christ alone, but they also are necessary, as causes, unto salvation, are made evil works. (2.) In respect of the evil mind wherewith they urged these works, because they urged them in hatred of him, and to cross that which he had taught touching the sole sufficiency of Christ his righteousness unto salvation. (3.) In respect of their unfaithful working in the Lord his vineyard, because together with good seed they did sow tares in the Lord his field, joining with Christ the works of the law in the work of our salvation. Lastly, he calleth them the concision : (1.) By allusion unto circumcision, which they urged as necessary to salvation, saying, as it is in the Aets, chap. xv. 1, ‘ Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.’ (2.) Because, by urging circumcision, they did indeed cut the seamless coat of Christ, and rent the unity of the Church, which had now received the circumcision of Christ through baptism, and had left off that ceremony of the law. (3.) Because, by urging circumcision, they shewed themselves to be only cut in the foreskins of their flesh, but not to be circumcised in the heart, by putting off the sinful body of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ. Thus the apostle, upon these causes and respects, noteth those false teachers which were crept in amongst the Philippians, and of these he warneth them again and again, even three times, to beware.

Now touching the observations hence to be gathered here, 1, I note that the apostle speaketh unto the Philippians in general, that they should beware of false teachers. Whence I observe, that not clergymen alone, as they call them, but even all the faithful children of God, may and ought to try and judge by the Scriptures whether their teachers’ and preachers’ doctrine be true, and so to reject whatsoever they find not proved by the Scriptures, or agreeable to the Scriptures. For how should the Philippians beware of false teachers ? They should examine and try their doctrine, and receive that which was agreeable to that which he had taught them, and reject that which was not agreeable thereto. So we read it registered to the perpetual commendation of the men of Berea, Acts xvii. 11, that they searched the Scriptures to try whether those things which Paul preached unto them were so as he preached. For they, having received the Scriptures in credit before, were so to accept of those things which Paul preached unto them, if they were consonant to the Holy Scriptures, according to that of the same apostle, Gal. i. 9, ‘ If any man preach unto you otherwise than that ye have

received, let him be accursed; than that ye have received, (1.) Than that which God had promised before by his prophets in the holy Scriptures, as the same apostle speaketh, Rom. i. 2. And as the men of Berea did, so we read he willed the Thessalonians to do, where he said unto them, 1 Thes. v. 21, 'Try all things, and keep that which is good; where it is plain by ver. 12, that he speaketh not only to the pastors, but also to the flock. So the apostle John, in his epistle unto the faithful dispersed Jews, saith, 1 John iv. 1, 'Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world; where the apostle delivereth a general doctrine, that concerneth every one of the faithful, as he will avoid the seducing and deceits of false teachers, which is, that every man should try, by such rules as the Scripture setteth down, who is a true or false teacher, which is true or false doctrine. And therefore we see that the apostle rebuketh the Galatians very sharply, Gal. iii. 1, because they had given place unto false apostles which corrupted the pure doctrine of Christ, and had suffered themselves to be seduced by them. By which his sharp reproof of them, he plainly sheweth that they should have tried and examined the doctrine which those false apostles brought, by that which he had taught them, and so rejected that which was not agreeable unto wholesome doctrine. And what else mean those often admonitions in the prophets unto all the Jews to beware of false prophets: 'Hear not,' saith Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. 16, 'the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you, and teach you vanity: they speak the vision out of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord; hear them not. How then? what is to be done? Isaiah telleth thee, chap. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' This, then, is to be done; when the false prophets and teachers speak unto you, hear them not, so as to rest on what they say, but so hear them as that ye examine them by the law and by the testimony; and if they speak not according to this word, surely they have no knowledge, but are blind leaders of men, and so account of them. Thus then, both by the commendable example of the men of Berea, and by the precept of the apostles, John, and our apostle, and by the sharp reproof of the Galatians, and by the warrant of the prophets, it doth and may appear that even all the faithful children of God may and ought to try and judge by the Scriptures whether their teachers' doctrine be true, and so to reject whatsoever they find not agreeable to the Scriptures.

Yea, but it will be said that this were to make the sheep judges of their shepherds, and the people to control their ministers. No, not so; but the people must hear their ministers, and obey them, and be ordered by them, which they will the more cheerfully do, when, by searching the Scriptures, they shall find

their minister and teacher's doctrine to be the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and not the invention or tradition of men. If the teachers bring not the truth thus, their errors will indeed be despised, and no reason that when they bring not the truth their doctrine should be received as sound and good. But if they bring the truth, by this search of the Scriptures the truth which they bring is with the greater alacrity reverence and embraced, and themselves the more honoured and esteemed. Learn ye then, men and brethren, to make this use of this doctrine: 1. To beware of such as teach you otherwise than now we have taught you. Beware of such as will tell you that ye are not to meddle with the sense of the Scripture, or to judge of such doctrine as ye hear, whether it be true or false, but ye are only to try the spirits by taking knowledge of them to whom God hath given the gift of discerning spirits, and by obeying the church to whom Christ hath given the Spirit of truth, and this church, say they, is the church of Rome. By this that ye have heard ye see that such are false teachers, deceiving and being deceived. 2. Learn hence to be diligent in reading and in hearing the Scriptures, that so, ye may be able to try the spirits. In the Scriptures, as saith our Saviour, John v. 39, 'we think to have eternal life;' and by meditating therein we shall easily skill of those that would lead us out of the right way that guideth to eternal life. Let us therefore exercise ourselves in the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ which we have received, and let us mark them diligently which cause division and offences, contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and let us avoid them; yea, if any come unto us and bring not this doctrine, let us not receive him, nor bid him God speed, 2 John 10; let us have no familiarity with him, but let us abandon all fellowship with him.

The second thing which here I note is, the apostle's often iteration of this *caveat* unto the Philippians, admonishing them again and again, even three times, to beware of false teachers. Whence we may observe, how needful a matter it is for us to take heed of false teachers, which seek to seduce us from that doctrine which we have learned in the gospel of Christ Jesus. Which thing, as this often iteration of this *caveat* may confirm unto us, so this circumstance also, even in this matter, that the apostle having often before, by word of mouth, warned them of false teachers, yet adventured the reproof, if they should blame him for warning them again by writing. Again, when our apostle took his last farewell of seeing the Ephesians any more, how carefully did he warn them of false teachers! Acts xx. 28-31, 'Take heed, saith he, unto yourselves, &c.: for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves, &c.; therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one both night and day with tears.' He begins with, 'Take heed unto yourselves;' he ends with, 'Watch, and remember,' &c., as if this

taking heed of false teachers were a thing most needful for them to be diligent in. And our Saviour Christ, Mark viii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod,' where, willing his disciples to beware of the contagious doctrine of those that laboured to subvert his gospel, the word of our salvation, he satisfieth not himself with saying, 'Take heed,' or, 'Beware,' but for the better impression of his *eareat* he joineth both together, and saith, 'Take heed and beware.' In which places the very careful admonitions of our Saviour Christ, and of our apostle, expressed by so many ingeminations, sometimes of 'Beware, beware, beware;' sometimes of 'Take heed, watch, and remember;' sometimes of 'Take heed, and beware,' do most evidently shew what a needful thing it is for us to take diligent heed of false teachers, lest any of us be seduced by their enticing speeches from that doctrine which we have learned in the gospel of Christ Jesus. And sure it is a thing no less needful for us now than at any time heretofore it hath been, to beware of false teachers. For have we not now many everywhere which 'creep into houses, and lead captive simple women laden with sins, and led with divers lusts?' 2 Tim. iii. 6. Have we not now many everywhere which compass sea and land to make one of their profession, so to make him twofold more the child of hell than they themselves are? Mat. xxiii. 15. Have we not many everywhere by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of, and such as with feigned words would make merchandise of your souls? Have we not now men arising even of our own selves, and

speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them? Yes, my brethren, *Rome* and *Rheims* swear many, and send them unto us, as to draw us from our allegiance unto our sovereign, so to corrupt our sincere minds with their poisoned doctrines. And these wander up and down secretly and in corners, speaking evil of the way of truth, and leading back again as many as they can unto the abominations of Egypt. Again, others thereto are arising of ourselves, who, whether seduced by others, or through malcontentedness, or by the just judgment of God blinded that they cannot see the light, or howsoever else bewitched; but many others are, even arising of ourselves, who privily sow cursed tares in this field of the Lord, who first closely slander the truth, and the most godly and Christian professors thereof, and then afterward closing in farther with you, draw you on by little and little, till at length ye be drunk with the cup of their fornications. Many such, I say, there are amongst us, and therefore very needful it is for us to take heed and beware of them.

Yea, but how shall we know them? They profess Christ, and the same apostolic creed with us; they admit the canonical Scriptures as we do; they say they condemn idolatry and superstition as we do; how then shall we know them? They come indeed in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; by their fruits ye shall know them. They may well be called, as these false teachers among the Philippians, 'dogs, evil workers, the concision.' For my third note therefore, and observation from these words, I will briefly hence gather certain notes whereby ye may know and discern false teachers.

LECTURE L.

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, &c.—PHILIP. III. 2, 3.

IN this exhortation or *eareat*, in that the apostle noteth these false teachers which were crept in amongst the Philippians by the name of 'dogs, of evil workers, and of the concision,' I observe certain notes whereby to descry and discern false teachers, even such as it is very needful for us to take heed of, and to beware.

1. Therefore it is a note of false teachers ever like dogs to be barking and snarling against the truth, and against the professors thereof; for this they take of dogs, even upon no reason to be barking, and they think the field half won if they can fasten any slander upon the truth, or upon those that have been or are chief professors thereof. If this in this place of our apostle be not haply enough to satisfy some touching this note of false teachers, the apostle Peter also giveth the very same note of false teachers, where he saith, 2 Peter ii. 12, that 'as brute beasts led with sensuality, and made to be taken and destroyed, they speak evil of those things which they know not, even of the way

of truth which they know not, and of the professors thereof whom they cannot brook.' Such were those false teachers that troubled the church of Corinth, both calling into doubt a chief article of our faith, the resurrection of the dead, and likewise speaking very contemptibly of the apostle Paul himself, traducing him unto the people as one rude in speech, and one that had no gifts of knowledge or of wisdom, as we may plainly see by his first epistle to the Corinthians. Mark, then, I beseech you, who now at this day they are that speak evil of the way of truth and of the professors thereof. Who are they now that tell you that the Scripture containeth not all things necessary to be believed to salvation; that tell you that the holy Scriptures, though truly translated into vulgar tongues, may not be read indifferently of all men, for fear of great harm that may ensue thereupon? Who are they now that tell you that the reading of the Scriptures is the very bane of religion, and virtue, and good life among

ns? Do not these speak evil of the way of truth, even of the holy word of truth? Again, who are they now that fill their mouths with as bitter words and odious speeches as out of their malicious hearts they can against Luther, Calvin, Martyr, Beza, and the like? Who are they now that speak so contemptibly against the ministers of the gospel, as that they fill your ears with all manner of evil sayings against them? Whosoever they be that thus speak evil of the truth, and of the professors thereof, they have a mark of false teachers. Mark them therefore diligently, and beware, and take heed of them.

2. A second note of false teachers it is, like dogs principally to respect their bellies, and more to serve their own bellies than the Lord Jesus Christ; for this they take of dogs, to be so ravenous and greedy for the belly, as that through covetousness with feigned words they make merchandise of men's souls. This note of false teachers our apostle also gives in the Epistle to the Romans, where having exhorted the Romans to beware of false apostles and teachers, he giveth them this note to know them by: Rom. xvi. 18, 'They that are such,' saith he, 'serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies; and with fair speech and flattering deceive the hearts of the simple.' 'They serve their own bellies;' that is, they seek their own gain, and respect their own advantage in their profession of religion. And the apostle Peter likewise gives the same note of them, 2 Peter ii. 14, where he saith that they have hearts exercised with covetousness, through covetousness making merchandise of men's souls. Such a one was Balaam, of whom the apostle Peter saith in the same chapter, that 'he loved the wages of unrighteousness.' Such were those of whom Isaiah speaketh, chap. lvi. 11, that they were 'greedy dogs, which could never have enough.' Such were these among the Philippians, whose God (as the apostle saith) was their belly. Mark, then, who now at this day they are that, through covetousness, would make merchandise of your souls. Who are they now that set on sale the forgiveness of your sins, and the kingdom of heaven for money? Who are they now that under colour of long prayers devour widows' houses? that for such or such lands, such or such sums of money, such or such relief unto such or such places, will promise you to say so many prayers for so many days or years, for you or for your friends? Who are they now that make gain godlieness, and do all that they do in deed and in truth for the maintenance of their state and of their bellies? Erasmus, when he was asked by Frederick Duke of Saxony his judgment of Luther, said that there were two great faults of his: one, that he meddled with the pope's crown; another, that he meddled with the monk's belly. Erasmus his meaning was, that those two things they were most of all careful for, and therefore could not endure the meddling with them. Do not such like dogs serve

their bellies, and through covetousness make merchandise of you? Whosoever they be that do so, they have a mark of false teachers. Mark them, therefore, and take heed of them. 'Beware of dogs,' of barking and greedy dogs. My next two notes I gather from that, that these false teachers are called 'evil workers.'

A third note therefore of false teachers it is, so to teach the necessity of works unto salvation, as to make them joint-workers with Christ of our salvation, as if our salvation were not by Christ alone, but by the works of the law also. True it is that we must walk in those good works which God hath ordained us to walk in, Eph. ii. 10, or else we cannot be saved; but yet 'by grace are we saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast himself,' ver. 8, 9. To teach therefore that our works are any part of that righteousness whereby we are justified or saved, is a note of false teachers; which thing also our apostle witnesseth in another place, Gal. v. 4, where he saith that such 'make the grace of God of none effect.' Such were those that had bewitched the Galatians, whose doctrine in his epistle unto them he doth at large confute, and sheweth that we are justified only by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law. Such also were those that were crept in amongst these Philippians, whom in this chapter he confuteth, shewing that Christ alone is our righteousness, and that we have no righteousness of our own at all by any works of the law. Mark, then, who now at this day they are that teach man's righteousness or salvation to be of his works. Who are they now that tell you that we are made righteous before God, not by faith alone in Christ his blood, but by works also? Who are they now that tell you that not by Christ his merits alone, but by the merit of our own works also, we gain heaven, and that not to ourselves alone, but to others also? Who are they now that tell you that, together with Christ, good works must be joined, as workers together with him of our justification and salvation? Whosoever they be that do so, they have a mark of false teachers. Mark them, therefore, and take heed of them; beware of them, they are evil workers, making those works which, as they are done according to the law, are good works, by this perverse doctrine evil works.

A fourth note of false teachers it is, like unto unfaithful workmen in the Lord his vineyard, to teach for doctrines men's precepts, and traditions of men. For this false teachers take of evil and unfaithful workers in the Lord his vineyard, that either instead of the word, or at least together with the pure seed of the word, they sow men's precepts and traditions of men. Our Saviour noteth it in the envious man, that he sowed tares among the wheat, Mat. xiii. 28, and it is notable in all his brood. Such were those scribes and pharisees that we read of in the gospel, of whom it is said that they taught for doctrines the comand-

ments of men, Mark vii. 7; whereupon our Saviour told them that they worshipped him in vain. Mark, then, who now at this day do thus resemble unfaithful workmen in the Lord his vineyard. Who are they now that teach you to do a great number of things, for the doing whereof there is no rule at all in the Scriptures? Who are they now that fill your ears with traditions of the apostles, as they say, and traditions of the church, as they say, making them even of equal authority with the writings of the apostles? Who are they now that teach you to believe otherwise than ye are warranted by the Scriptures, the rule of faith? Who are they now that mingle with the pure seed of God's word the chaff of man's brain, and give equal authority to the written word and to unwritten traditions? Do not such shew themselves to be of the brood of the envious man? Whosoever they be that do so, they have a mark of false teachers. Mark them, therefore, and take heed of them; beware of them, they are evil workers, working unfaithfully in the Lord his vineyard.

Now, from this also, that those false teachers among the Philippians were called the concision, arise two notes whereby to discern false teachers.

A fifth note, therefore, of false teachers it is, like unto these of the concision, to cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to cut themselves from the unity of the church; for this they take of the concision, that as they cut themselves from the unity of the church, and caused division in the church, by urging circumcision of the flesh, which the church had done with, so commonly false teachers rend the unity of the church, and cause divisions, by teaching other doctrine than the Spirit of God hath taught the church to receive. This note of false teachers our apostle also gives elsewhere, where he saith, Rom. xvi. 17, 'Mark them diligently which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.' Such were those false apostles and teachers which troubled the church of Corinth after Paul had planted it, who, by their ambition, brought in such factions, and schisms, and dissensions into the church that the house of Cloe, a virtuous and zealous woman, advertised the apostle thereof, 1 Cor. i. 11. Mark, then, who now at this day they are that cause division and offences in the church. Who are they now that labour and plot, and cast all the ways they can devise to set us all every way by the ears together? Who are they now that cast seditious libels amongst us, whereby to stir us up unto all practices of hostility against the state? Who are they now that secretly, and in every corner, labour to disgrace us, and the doctrine which we teach, and to lesson you with other doctrine contrary to that ye have received and learned? Do not these, whosoever they be, cause division, and contention, and offences? Whosoever they be that do so, they have a mark of false teachers. Mark

them, therefore, and take heed of them. Beware of them; they resemble these of the concision.

The last note which for this time I observe of false teachers is, like unto these of the concision, to glory and brag of false titles which nothing belong unto them. For this they take of these of the concision, that as they gloried falsely in the circumcision, as anon we shall hear, so commonly false teachers glory much in the titles, and in the things wherein they have no right at all to glory. This note also of false teachers the apostle Peter gives, 2 Pet. ii. 18, where he saith of them that 'they speak swelling words of vanity.' Such are those of whom our Saviour Christ saith, Mat. xxiv. 5, 'Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.' Mark, then, who now at this day they are that deceive the world with vain titles, and shows of names wherewithal they can lay no just claim. Who are they now that come in the name and title of the 'Society of Jesus,' and deceive many? Who are they now that colour all their superstitions errors with the goodly title of the doctrine of the church? Who are they now that mask themselves under that gay title of holy Catholices? Who are they now that have still in their mouths, *The church, the church*, as if they, and none but they, were the church of Christ? Do not these, whosoever they be, brag of great titles which nothing belong unto them? Whosoever they be that do so, they have a mark of false teachers. Mark them, therefore, and take heed of them. Beware of them; they resemble these of the concision.

Many other notes there are whereby false teachers may easily be descried and discerned, and which haply might be further gathered even from this *caveat* of our apostle in this place. But these are such as seemed unto me most naturally to offer themselves to be observed from these names wherewithal our apostle brandeth these false teachers. If any desire to have them manifested by further notes, let them read 2 Pet. ii., where they are at large notified. By these ye may in part descry them; and those that are branded with any of these marks, take heed of them; for howsoever haply some may be branded with some one of these marks, who yet will wind himself out of the number of false teachers, yet will he not shift it, but that he hath some one mark of a false teacher. But above all things, take heed and beware of them upon whom the most of these, or all these notes do fall most justly. They will, I know, tell you that they love the truth, that they abhor idolatry, that they embrace the apostolic faith, that with all reverence they receive the Scriptures, that they honour religion, and that they detest superstition. They will tell you of their devotion in prayer, of their contempt of riches, of their continency in life, of their abstineney in meats and drinks, of their works of charity, &c. But whatsoever they tell you, by these notes that I have told you ye shall know what they

are; and when ye know them, take heed and beware of them. For though they come unto you in sheep's clothing, yet inwardly they are ravening wolves. Beware of barking dogs which bark against the truth, and the professors thereof; and beware of greedy dogs which, through covetousness, make merchandise of your souls. Beware of such workers as make their works joint workers with Christ of our salvation; and beware of such workers as work unfaithfully in the Lord his vineyard, mingling with the pure seed of God's word the chaff of man's brain. Beware of such as resemble the concision, in rending the unity of the church, and in causing division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned in the gospel of Jesus Christ; and beware of such as resemble the concision in bragging of false titles which nothing belong unto them. And let these things suffice to be noted from this exhortation or *caveat*. Now followeth a particular instruction to the Philippians touching circumcision truly so called, in these words, 'For we are,' &c.

For we are the circumcision, &c. We have heard how the apostle, in his *caveat*, noted the false teachers, which urged circumcision as necessary to salvation, by the title of the concision, saying, 'Beware of the concision.' Now, in these words the apostle giveth the reason why he called them the concision, 'For we,' saith he, 'are the circumcision,' as if he should have said, They are not the circumcision, though they glory therein; but rather they are the concision, and we are the circumcision, the true circumcision. Now this he proveth thus: we worship God in the spirit, therefore we are the circumcision. And again, that they worship God in the spirit he proveth thus: we rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, therefore we worship God in the spirit. So that the connection of the points is this, they are the concision, not the circumcision. The proof is this, we are the circumcision, therefore they are not the circumcision. Again, we are the circumcision. The proof is this: we worship God in the spirit, therefore we are the circumcision. Again, we worship God in the spirit. The proof is this: we rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, therefore we worship God in the spirit. To gather the whole reason into one sum, the apostle here proveth that the false apostles which were among the Philippians, and which gloried in their circumcision, were the concision, and not the circumcision, by an argument drawn from the nature of true circumcision, thus: they which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, they are the circumcision, they are truly circumcised. But we worship God in the spirit, &c., therefore, &c. This is the form of the apostle his proceeding and discourse in this place. Now, touching the words, and the meaning of them.

I. It is said 'we are the circumcision,' where the meaning of the apostle is this, we are circumcised with the true circumcision. There is then (as the apostle

shews) a twofold circumcision: one outward in the flesh, Rom. ii. 28, 29, which was a cutting off the foreskin of the flesh, instituted by God for a figure of the covenant which was made between him and Abraham, Gen. xvii. 11; another of the heart, in the spirit, which is a cutting off from the heart of all carnal affections, whereby we might be hindered in the spiritual service of God, and in our rejoicing in Jesus Christ, whereof Moses maketh mention, where he saith, Deut. xxx. 6, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' That carnal circumcision was that wherein the false apostles gloried, and of which they told the Philippians, that except they were so circumcised they could not be saved. But that being a ceremony which, when Christ came, was abolished, the apostle saith plainly, Rom. ii. 28, that 'that is no circumcision which is outward in the flesh;' nay, he saith farther unto the Galatians, chap. v. 2, that 'if they be circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing.' And therefore the apostle calleth them the concision, because they cut and rent the peace of the church, by urging that as necessary to salvation which was abolished, and was now not only unprofitable, but hurtful. The other circumcision, which is of the heart, in the spirit, made without hands, by putting off the sinful body of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ, that is the circumcision wherein the apostle glorieth, and saith, 'we are the circumcision,' i. e. we are circumcised with the true circumcision, that which is outward in the flesh being no circumcision. Again, where it is added, 'which worship God in the spirit,' by worshipping God in the spirit he meaneth the spiritual worshipping of God; as if he should have said, We are the circumcision, which worship God spiritually, not after the outward ceremonies of the law, but in the spirit of our mind, lifting up our souls unto him, and rejoicing in his holy name. Again, where he saith that they 'rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh,' he opposeth the one against the other, and both signifieth that the confidence of their salvation is only in Christ Jesus; not in any outward thing, either circumcision of the flesh, or what outward thing else soever; and withal implieth that they have confidence in the circumcision of the flesh, or in any outward thing whatsoever, and not only in Christ Jesus; they indeed rejoice not in Christ Jesus as in the horn of their salvation. It is then, in brief, as if the apostle should thus have said: I have warned yon to beware of the concision, and do ye beware of the concision. The reason is, for they who glory that they are the circumcision, are not the circumcision, but the concision, and we are the circumcision; we are circumcised with the true circumcision; we, I say, which worship God, not after the outward ceremonies of the law, but in the spirit, and in truth, and

which, renouncing all confidence of our salvation in the flesh, or in any outward thing, do only rejoice in Christ Jesus as in the horn of our salvation. Thus ye see the purpose of the apostle in this place, what he proveth, how he proveth it, and the meaning of the words. Now let us see what we may observe hence for our use and instruction.

1. Here I note the apostle his elegant allusion* between concision and circumcision, where he calleth himself and the Philippians the circumcision, and the false teachers the concision, by way of allusion unto circumcision, wherof they boasted in vain. The like allusions we have divers times in holy Scriptures, as in Isaiah chap. v. 7, 'The Lord,' saith the prophet, 'looked for judgment, but behold oppression ;' the allusion is plain in the Hebrew between *mishpat* and *mishpach*;† and again, 'for righteousness, but behold a crying,' where the allusion is as plain between צִדְקָה and צִדְקָתָךְ. Also, in the New Testament, as in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. xii. 3, where it is said, 'I say unto you, that no man understand above that which is meet to understand, but that every man understand according to sobriety,' where, in the original the allusion is notable between σοφία, ἡ τελεόποιη and σωφρονία. Divers the like might be produced both out of the Old Testament and likewise the New, but let these for this time suffice. Hence I make this observation, that it is not unlawful for the ministers and teachers of the word sometimes to use allusions and elegancies of speech, for we see that the Holy Ghost, by using them sometimes, hath sanctified the use of them. But yet great moderation and discretion is to be used therein, lest if we grow to take too great a felicity and pleasure therein, we fall into such a rhyming vein and curious affectation as is unbecoming the majesty of the word, and the gravity of the minister of the word. That rule of the apostle is by us diligently to be kept, that 'no jesting, or vain, or light, or foolish speech proceed out of our mouths, but only that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers,' Eph. iv. 29. From this observation ye, for your use, may learn not hastily to judge, or presently to condemn, such ministers and preachers of the word as sometimes use allusions and other elegancies of speech, for ye see the Holy Ghost doth not altogether avoid them. And albeit ordinarily the most plain and the most familiar form of words be far the best for you, and the most to be accepted by you, yet sometimes such an allusion, or such an elegancy of speech, so graceth the speech, as that both it best liketh you, and likewise maketh the best impression in you. In a word, both in the speaker moderation is required that such allusions or elegancies be not too often used, and in the hearer likewise judgment is required, that such allusions or elegancies be not too rashly condemned.

* That is, 'play upon words.'—ED.

† That is, מִשְׁפָט and מִשְׁפָט.—ED.

2. It is to be noted that the apostle saith, 'for we are the circumcision.' For thereby both the apostle denieth that circumcision which is made with hands, and which is outward in the flesh, to be truly circumcision, and likewise affirmeth that spiritual circumcision, which is made without hands by the Spirit in the heart, by purging thence all evil affections, to be truly circumcision, so that not they which are circumcised with carnal circumcision are the circumcision, but they only which are circumcised with spiritual circumcision are the circumcision. Whence, first, I observe, that as all other ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, so likewise the circumcision of the flesh had then an end when Christ came in the flesh, so that the use of them afterwards was not only unprofitable, but hurtful. For albeit it be said, both of circumcision and of other ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, that they were to continue for ever, Gen. xvii. 13, Exod. xii. 14, xxxi. 16, yet that is so to be understood as that the term of their continuance was Christ his coming in the flesh, for they, being only shadows of good things to come, when Christ, which was the body figured by those shadows, came, they had an end, and were abolished, as the apostle shews at large in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And albeit there were not wanting, both of the Jews, and of the Ebionites, and Corinthians, that in the apostles' time joined circumcision with Christ, Acts xv. 1, and urged it as necessary to salvation, yet we see that the apostles thought it not meet to burden the Gentiles with circumcision or with the law, ver. 28; nay, the apostle plainly telleth the Galatians, chap. v. 2, that 'if they be circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing ;' and again, ver. 4, that 'whosoever are justified by the law they are fallen from grace ;' in both which places the apostle shews that to join with Christ circumcision, or the law, as things necessary to salvation, is not only unprofitable, but also hurtful. Yea, now that Christ Jesus is come in the flesh, in him 'neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but only a new creature,' Gal. v. 6, regenerated by 'faith, which worketh by love,' chap. vi. 15.

Yea, but here the question haply will be asked touching circumcision, why it was abolished, seeing it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, as the apostle witnesseth, Rom. iv. 11. If it had been a seal of the righteousness of the law, it might very well have been thought that when the claim of righteousness by the law ceased, then the seal thereof should likewise be abolished. But being the seal of the righteousness of faith, it may seem that, the righteousness of faith remaining, the seal thereof should not be abolished. I answer, 1, out of the apostle, that he doth not simply say, that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, but of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had when he was uncircumcised. Now, what was the righteousness of his faith? Surely other than that which is now our righteousness of faith. For

unto us it is accounted for righteousness that we believe in Jesus Christ already come in the flesh, and this is our righteousness of faith. But unto him it was accounted for righteousness that he believed in the promised seed, which should afterwards come in the flesh; and this was his righteousness of faith. Right, therefore, it was, that when the promised seed, which he believed, came in the flesh, the seal of this righteousness of his faith should be abolished, even as the seals also of the righteousness of our faith shall be abolished at his second coming unto judgment, when all things shall be accomplished, and we shall see him face to face, even as he is. Again, unto the very question itself, why circumcision was abolished, I answer that it was most needful, because ‘every man that is circumcised is bound,’ as saith the apostle, Gal. v. 3, ‘to keep the whole law.’ Whereupon elsewhere the apostle calls circumcision ‘a bondage,’ Gal. ii. 4, in which bondage they were kept until faith came. But ‘when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem all which were under the law,’ chap. iv. 4, 5; and he took all the

ceremonies and rites that were against us out of the way, and fastened them on his cross. Thus, then, ye see the abolishing, as of all the ceremonies, and rites, and sacrifices of the law, so of carnal circumcision after that faith came, that is, after that we began to believe in Christ Jesus manifested in the flesh. I know not whether I speak so plainly of these things as that ye do conceive me, neither know I how to speak more plainly. Consider how they arise from the place we now handle, and they will be so much the more easy to be understood.

If now ye ask me whether circumcision be quite and utterly now abolished, so that nothing thereof remaineth, I answer, that the ceremony of the circumcision of the flesh is utterly abolished, so that nothing of the ceremony now remaineth. But that which was morally signified thereby, to wit, regeneration, and the circumcision of the heart from all evil and wicked affections, that is that which, when the ceremony was in use, was most accepted, and that still remaineth; and this is that which I should now secondly have observed from these words, if the time had given leave.

LECTURE LI.

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.—PHILIP. III. 3.

IF now again ye ask me whether circumcision be quite and utterly so abolished, as that nothing thereof remaineth, I answer, that the circumcision of the flesh is quite and utterly abolished; so that since faith came, that is, since we began to believe in Christ manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and received up into glory, nothing at all of that ceremony remaineth. But even then, when the ceremony was in use, both this and likewise all other ceremonies of the law had, besides the ceremony, a moral use and signification unto that people of the Jews, which was far and incomparably more accepted with God than was the ceremony itself, whatsoever it was. This we may plainly see and perceive by these manifold incantations so often used in the writings of the prophets; when observing the ceremony commanded, the Jews neglected that moral use thereof which they should especially have regarded. ‘I am full,’ saith the Lord, Isa. i. 11–13, ‘of the burnt-offering of rams, and of the fat of fed beasts; and I desire not the blood of bullocks, nor of lambs, nor of goats. Bring no more oblations in vain; incense is an abomination to me,’ &c. Again, in another place, Amos v. 21, he saith, ‘I hate and abhor your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.’ What then? Did not the Lord

desire the blood of bullocks, nor of lambs, nor of goats? Did he not regard burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, and meat-offerings? Were the sabbaths, and new moons, and feast days, such things as in which he took no pleasure at all? No doubt but the Lord had commanded all these things whereof the prophets here speak, in his law given by the hand of Moses, as might easily be proved out of the books of Numbers and Leviticus. And this was it that the hypocritical Jews stood upon with the prophets, saying, that they kept the law of God duly, because they observed the outward ceremonies and sacrifices commanded in the law. But this was that that the Lord by his prophets reproved in them, that they neglected that moral use of those things, which they should principally have regarded. They stayed themselves in the outward worship of God, and looked not into the inward worship of him; they observed the naked ceremony, but they regarded not mercy and judgment, piety and obedience, faith and repentance. These things they should have done, and not have left the other undone. The ceremony should not have been neglected by them, but that inward and more holy worship, whereunto by the ceremony they were led, should have been principally regarded by them. For in this the Lord had more pleasure than in all burnt-offerings and sacrifices whatsoever: as it is said, 1 Sam. xv. 22, ‘to obey is better than sacrifice;

and to hearken is better than the fat of rams.' And again the Lord saith by his prophet, Hosea vi. 6, ' I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.' Thus then it is plain, both that the outward ceremonie had a moral and more spiritual use, and likewise that this was more accepted with God, even then when the ceremony was in use, than was the ceremony though commanded.

Now as it was in other ceremonics of the law, so was it in this circumcision of the flesh, that it had a moral use and signification, the regard whereof was far more accepted with God than was the observation of the ceremony itself. The moral use and signification thereof was, to put them in mind of the circumcision of the heart, that thence they might purge all wicked and carnal affections, such as any way were like to cross and hinder their spiritual service and worship of God. And as in other ceremonics, when the ceremony was abolished, yet the moral use thereof still remained, so likewise in this, when the outward circumcision of the flesh was abolished, yet the inward circumcision of the heart, which was morally signified by the entward ceremony, still remained; so that as they then were, so still we are to circumcise the foreskins of our hearts, by cutting away from thence all carnal affections and ungodly lusts which fight against the soul. And this was that circumcision wherein our apostle gloried when he said, 'we are the circumcision.'

Hence then, 3, I observe what that circumcision is which yet remaineth, and wherein we may and ought to glory and rejoice. The circumcision which yet remaineth, if ye will have it in one word, is our regeneration, the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, as the apostle speaks, Titus iii. 5. If ye would have a larger description of it, it is, as this place of our apostle maketh manifest, 'a cutting away from the heart of all carnal affections,' whereby we might be hindered in the spiritual service of God, and in our rejoicing in Christ Jesus; so that, being thus circumcised, 'we worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,' or in any outward thing whatsoever. This is most commonly called the circumcision of the heart; both by Moses, where he saith, Deut. x. 16, 'Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and harden your necks no more'; and by the prophet Jeremiah, where he saith unto the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Jer. iv. 4, 'Be circumcised to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts'; and by our apostle Paul, where he saith, Rom. ii. 29, that 'the circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter.' Neither is it called circumcision of the heart by way of exclusion of circumcision from other parts of man. For there is also mention of the circumcision of the ears; as where Stephen saith, Acts vii. 51, 'Ye stiff-necked, and of uncircumcised hearts and ears,' i. e. which will not

hear when God speaks unto you; and also of the circumcision of the lips, as where Moses said unto the Lord, Exod. vi. 30, 'Behold I am of uncircumcised lips,' i. e. I am not able to speak unto Pharaoh, being barbarous and rude in speech. There is then not only circumcision of the heart in the will and understanding, when all carnal affections are purged thence, but there is also circumcision of the lips, when our speech is such as that it ministers grace unto the hearers; and also circumcision of the ears, when we open our ears unto the Lord speaking unto us, and willingly and even greedily hearken after those things which belong unto our peace. But yet commonly I think both these are comprehended in the circumcision of the heart; so that by the circumcision of the heart, the circumcision of the ears and of the lips likewise is understood. It is called also spiritual circumcision, because it is 'made without hands,' Col. ii. 11, by the Spirit of almighty God, as witnesseth Moses, where he saith, Dent. xxx. 6, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' Whereupon the apostle saith, Rom. ii. 29, that 'the praise of it is not of men, but of God.' It is called also by the apostle, 'the circumcision of Christ,' Col. ii. 11; because made by the Spirit of Christ, which doth illuminate our understanding, renew our will, sanctify our affections, and work in us all holy desires to die unto sin and to live unto God in righteousness and true holiness. This circumcision then of Christ, this circumcision of the heart, this spiritual circumcision which is made without hands by the finger of the Spirit, illuminating our understandings, renewing our wills, purging our carnal affections, crucifying in us the old man, and quickening us in our inner man, in the spirit of our mind, this is the true circumcision, and this is that circumcision wherewith the apostle rejoiceth that he was circumcised; and unless we be circumcised with this circumcision, we have no cause of rejoicing. For that which the apostle saith of carnal circumcision, Gal. v. 2, 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,' is quite otherwise in this spiritual circumcision. For unless we be thus circumcised, Christ shall profit us nothing, according to that of our Saviour, John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, i. e. unless he be born again by the Spirit, unless he be circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, by putting off the sinful body of the flesh, and becoming a new creature, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, he hath no portion among the sons of God. So that that holdeth still, if we be not circumcised, we belong not to the covenant; but if we be circumcised with this circumcision of Christ, then may we rejoice, knowing that we are the sons of God, and partakers of the covenant of promise.

Then look what was the preferment of the Jew above all other people, that is our preferment above the sons of men ; and look what was the profit of circumcision unto the Jew, that and more is the profit of circumcision unto us. For thus we are the circumcised, and not they, we are that peculiar people of the Jews, and not they, inasmuch as now ' he is not a Jew which is one outward, neither now is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew which is one within : and the circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God,' Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Let this, men and brethren, teach us to descend into ourselves, and see whether we be circumcised or uncircumcised ; whether we can, with the apostle, truly say that we are the circumcision, that we are circumcised with the true circumcision. Do we worship the Lord in the spirit, with holy worship, not after the foolish fancies of man's brain ? Do we rejoice in Christ Jesus as in the horn of our salvation, and renounce all confidence in all outward things whatsoever ? Are our understandings instructed in the things which are spiritually discerned ? Are our affections inclined to the rule of God's Spirit ? Are our desires bent to the things that belong unto our peace ? Are we purged from all carnal affections and ungodly desires ? Are our lips fain when we sing unto our God ? and are our tongues glad when we talk of his righteousness and salvation ? Do we refrain our feet from every evil path ? and do we give our members as weapons of righteousness unto God, to serve him in righteousness and in holiness ? If the Spirit do witness those things unto our spirits, then let us know that we are circumcised with the true circumcision, so that we may say with the apostle, ' We are the circumcision.' For this is the work of the Spirit, thus to consecrate us to his holy worship, thus to settle our rejoicing on Christ Jesus, and on him alone, thus to teach us his will, thus to sanctify our desires, thus to purge and cleanse us from inordinate affections, thus to make us vessels holy unto the Lord, and thus to guide our feet into the way of peace. And working thus in us, he doth circumcise us with circumcision made without hands, making us new creatures. But if we worship the Lord, so that we bow both to him and Baal ; if we trust to be saved by our works, or by anything but only by Christ Jesus and faith in his blood ; if the gospel be yet hid unto us, so that we cannot savour or perceive the things of the Spirit of God ; if our affections be so inordinate as that we be full of strife, envy, hatred, malice, wrath, contentions, backbitings, whisperings, swelling, and discord ; if our desires be so unbridled as that we run wholly after the pleasures of the flesh, and never mind the things of the Spirit ; if as yet we will be every one more loath than other to talk of matters of religion, of things belonging to our salvation, of the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and the like, but will strain no courtesy

at all to talk filthily, and uncleanly, and unseemly, and scoffingly, and irreligiously ; if as yet either we will not open our ears to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely, or else will grin and gnash our teeth at him that shall roundly knock at the door of our hearts, to rouse us out of the dead sleep of sin whereinto we are fallen ; if, I say, things stand thus with us, are we not of uncircumcised hearts, and lips, and ears ? Yes, my brethren, if it be thus, whatsoever we say, or what show soever we make, yet are we of uncircumcised hearts, lips, and ears. For therefore is our understanding full of darkness, our will and desires perverse and crooked, and our affections inordinate, because the Lord, by his Spirit, hath not circumcised our hearts ; therefore are our mouths filled, not with talk of such things as belong unto our peace, but with corrupt communication, and jesting, and taunting, and profane talking, because the Lord, by his Spirit, hath not circumcised our lips ; and therefore are our ears open unto every wicked profanation of God's name, and every bad suggestion of our neighbours, rather than unto the word of our salvation, because the Lord, by his Spirit, hath not circumcised our ears. In one word, are we, and walk we as, children of disobedience ? It is because the Lord hath not yet regenerated us by his Holy Spirit, because we yet are not circumcised with the circumcision of Christ. Let every man, therefore, descend into his own heart, and as he doth find himself, by thus searching his heart and his reins, to be circumcised or uncircumcised, so let him think himself to be received into the covenant, or yet to be a stranger from the covenant of promise ; and he that is circumcised, let him not gather his uncircumcision, i. e. as now I expound it, let him not defile himself with the corruptions which are in the world through lust, but, having escaped from the filthiness of the world, let him give his members servants unto righteousness in holiness, and worship the Lord with holy worship. But he that hath walked either forty or four years in the wilderness of this life, and is not yet circumcised, let him know that even that person that is not circumcised, that man that is not regenerated by the Lord his Spirit, even he shall be cut off from the Lord his people, and shall have none inheritance among the saints of God. Unto such, therefore, I say, as the Lord by his prophet, Jer. iv. 4, saith to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, ' Break up the fallow ground of your hearts, and sow not among the thorns : be circumcised to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, lest the Lord his wrath come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the wickedness of your inventions.' And with the prophet Hosea, chap. x. 12, I say farther, ' Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap after the measure of mercy, break up your fallow ground : for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.' Weed out all impurity and wicked affections

from your hearts, put off the sinful body of the flesh, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds. ‘For this I say unto you, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,’ 1 Cor. xv. 50. ‘Blessed and holy is he that hath his part in the first resurrection,’ Rev. xx. 6, i.e. by the power of God his Spirit regenerating him, riseth from sin, wherein he was dead, unto newness and holiness of life; for on such the second death hath no power. And let this suffice to be spoken touching both the carnal and likewise the spiritual circumcision, by occasion of these words, ‘We are the circumcision.’ It followeth;—

Which worship God in the spirit. By this and the rest that follows is described, as I told you, who are circumcised with spiritual circumcision, even they which worship God spiritually, &c.; so that having spoken of spiritual circumcision, we have spoken in a generality both of this and the rest that follows. Yet it will not be amiss somewhat more particularly, yet as briefly as we can, to speak, by occasion of these words, of the spiritual worship of God. There is no people so far without God in this world, Jew or Gentile, Turk or other, but that both they know there is a God, and likewise think they worship him with true worship. But how a great many nations and languages should either know the true God, or truly worship him, it can scarce be imagined, seeing they want the holy word of life, where alone we both clearly know him, and likewise how to worship him. Nay, how should not they most grossly err touching the true worship of God, seeing where the word is, there are so many errors touching the true and spiritual worship of God? Witness those manifold will worships of God which men have devised unto themselves, and for which they have no warrant at all in the word; such as are forbidding of marriage, and forbidding of meats to some men at all times, and to all men at some times, under pretence of holy religion and devout service of God. But, for our instruction in this point, let us hence observe that not only is the spirit of our mind purified by the Spirit to serve him in holiness and in righteousness, but that, if we will not err in the performance of true and spiritual worship unto our God, we must proceed by this rule of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, inasmuch as, by rejoicing in Christ Jesus, we worship God spiritually. For what is there required in our spiritual worship of God, which, by our rejoicing in Christ Jesus, is not performed unto him? Is it not our spiritual worship of God to love him, to put our trust in him, to fear him, to pray unto him, to obey him, and to glorify him both in our bodies and in our spirits? And are not all these things performed unto him by our rejoicing in Christ Jesus? We rejoice in Christ Jesus, knowing that in him we are beloved; and therefore we love God, who, we know, doth love us in Christ Jesus. Again, we rejoice in Christ Jesus, knowing that in him all the promises of God are yea and amen; and therefore we

believe in God, and put our trust in his name, who, we know, for his sake, maketh good all his promises unto us. Again, we rejoice in Christ Jesus, knowing that by him an atonement and reconciliation is made between God and us; and therefore we fear God, whose wrath we know is now appeased towards us by the mediation of Christ Jesus. Again, we rejoice in Christ Jesus, knowing that by him we may go boldly unto the throne of grace; and therefore we pour out our prayers unto God, who, we know, giveth us whatsoever we ask by faith in his name. Again, we rejoice in Christ Jesus, knowing that through Christ we are able to do all things; and therefore we obey God, who, we know, strengtheneth us in Christ to do all things that he requireth of us. Again, we rejoice in Christ Jesus, knowing that he is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and therefore we glorify God both in our bodies and in our spirits, who, we know, hath given us his Son, and together with him hath given us all things also. So that through the rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus we worship God spiritually, with all holy worship of love, of faith, of fear, of prayer, of obedience, and of glorifying his name both in our bodies and in our spirits. Yea, and whosoever hath not this rejoicing in Christ Jesus, it is impossible that he should worship God with this spiritual and holy worship. For how shall he love God, that is not persuaded of the love of God towards him in Christ Jesus? How shall he believe in God, and put his trust in his name, that knoweth not that all his promises are yea and amen, most certain and sure, in Christ Jesus? How shall he fear God as a dutiful child, that assures not himself of his reconciliation with God by the death and intercession of Christ Jesus? How shall he pray unto God in faith, that knows not that his prayers shall be accepted and heard in Christ Jesus, that offereth our prayers unto God, and makes continual intercession for us? How shall he obey God in that which he commands, that knows not that God in Christ Jesus doth enable him to do that which he commandeth? How shall he glorify God in his body, or in his spirit, that knows not what great mercies God hath vouchsafed unto us through Christ Jesus? So that unless we can rejoice in Christ Jesus, even because we know all these things, we cannot possibly worship God with spiritual worship.

Will you then, men and brethren, have a direction for your spiritual worshipping of God? Surely it is needful, ‘for God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,’ John iv. 24. Let this, then, be your direction. Rejoice in Christ Jesus; rejoice in him, because ye are beloved in him, and then surely ye will love God, who loves you in Christ Jesus; rejoice in Christ, because in him all God’s promises are made good and performed unto you, and then surely ye will believe in God, and put your trust in him, who keepeth promise, and suf-

fereth not his truth to fail for ever ; rejoice in Christ, because by him ye have received the atonement, and then surely ye will fear God, whose wrath was appeased by the reconciliation of Christ Jesus ; rejoice in Christ, because through him your prayers are accepted and heard with God, and then surely ye will pour out your prayers unto God, who gives yon whatsoever ye ask in faith in his name ; rejoice in Christ, because in him ye are made able to do all things, and then surely ye will obey God, who strengtheneth you in Christ to do all things ; rejoice in Christ, because by him ye are redeemed, and saved, and by the power of his Spirit sanctified, and then surely ye will glorify God both in your bodies and in your spirits, who with Christ his Son giveth you all things, both for this life present, and likewise for that that is to come. So that there cannot be a better direction for our spiritual worship of God, than to rejoice in Christ Jesus, because by our rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus we are inflamed to love God, to believe in him, to put our trust in him, to fear him, to pray unto him, to obey him, and to glorify him both in our bodies and in our spirits, which is our spiritual worshipping of God. Whence it is also easy to guess why it is that we fail so much in the spiritual worshipping of God, which is even hence, because we fail in our rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

For our better instruction in which point of our rejoicing in Christ Jesus, let us in the next place hence observe, that to rejoice in Christ Jesus is not only to repose our whole trust and confidence in him, as in the horn of our salvation, to make our boast of him, and to tell of all the wondrous works that he hath done for us with gladness, but withal to renounce all confidence in the flesh, and in any outward thing whatsoever. For these are things which cannot stand together, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and reposing our confidence in any outward thing whatsoever ; for if we rejoice in Christ Jesus, then we repose the whole confidence of our salvation, and every part thereof, upon him, and him alone ; and if we repose our whole, or any part of the confidence of our salvation on any outward thing, and not on Christ Jesus alone, then we do not indeed rejoice in Christ Jesus. This the apostle plainly sheweth, where he saith, Gal. v. 4, that whosoever are justified by the law, they are fallen from grace ; that is, whosoever seek for their righteousness by the works of the law, or hope to be saved by them, they are fallen from grace, Christ profiteth them nothing. Let them look unto this, that trust unto their merits to be saved by them. Surely the conclusion from this place of our apostle lieth very hard upon them. For hence thus I gather, they that have confidence of their salvation by their merits, or by any outward thing whatsoever, and not only by Christ Jesus, they rejoice not in Christ Jesus ; they that rejoice not in Christ Jesus, they worship not God in the spirit ; they that worship not God in the spirit,

they are not circumcised with the true and spiritual circumcision ; *ergo*, they that have confidence of their salvation by their merits, they are not circumcised with the true and spiritual circumcision ; where in my judgment the conclusion is as inevitable as hard. If they answer that the apostle maketh no mention of the merit of works, and therefore nothing can hence be concluded against the merit of works, I answer again, that by the name of flesh in this place of our apostle is understood not only the circumcision of the flesh, or other ceremonies of the law, but all the works of the law, all man's merits whatsoever, even all outward things whatsoever. Which is plain by the antithesis and opposition in this place between Christ and the flesh, and likewise by that that followeth in the apostle. For, first, where he saith, ' We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,' in that he denieth that they have any confidence in the flesh, what else is his meaning, but that they have no confidence in anything but only in Christ Jesus, so rejoicing in him, as that they put their whole confidence in him. Again, when he shews afterwards what he means by the flesh, he speaketh not only of the circumcision of the flesh, but of his tribe, of his stock, of his religion, of his zeal, yea, and lest he should seem to leave out anything without Christ wherein he had any confidence, he speaketh expressly of all things without Christ, that for Christ he counteth all things loss. So that the conclusion (though most hard) will not be avoided, but that they that trust to be saved by their merits are not circumcised with the true and spiritual circumcision, but are as yet strangers from the covenant of promise, and have no inheritance among the sons of God.

Let us therefore, men and brethren, renounce all confidence in anything without Christ whatsoever, and let us trust only in the merits of Christ Jesus. He alone is ' made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; ' he hath purchased us with his own blood ; he is set for ever at the right hand of the throne of God to make intercession for us, and through him alone we receive all the blessings that we have, either for this life or that that is to come. Let us therefore rejoice in him, and not in anything without him. He that believeth in him, believeth in him that sent him ; and he that loveth him, loveth him that sent him ; and he that obeyeth him, obeyeth him that sent him ; and he that glorifieth him, glorifieth him that sent him. Let us therefore worship him with all holy worship, and so shall we worship God in the spirit, and so shall we be able truly to say with the apostle, ' We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.'

Circumcise, O Lord, we beseech thee, the foreskins of our hearts with the finger of thy Holy Spirit, that we may worship thee in spirit and in truth, and that we may rejoice in thy Son Christ Jesus as in the horn

of our salvation, renouncing all confidence in anything without him whatsoever! O Lord, purge us daily more and more from all inordinate affections, and unbridled desires, which anyway may draw us from thee, or hinder us in thy service! Renew in us right spirits, that we may worship thee, not after the fond

devices of our own brain, but in spirit and in truth, after the rule of thy holy word; and so sanctify us with thy Holy Spirit, that, abandoning all worldly confidence whatsoever, we may wholly and only rejoice in thy Son Christ Jesus for ever!

LECTURE LII.

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust.—PHILIP. III. 4-6.

NOW the apostle in these words proposeth unto them his own example, as an embracer of that truth, touching man's righteousness and salvation, which they were to embrace and follow, from this verse to the fifteenth. And first he shews that he for his part reposeth no trust or confidence of his righteousness or salvation in the circumcision of the flesh, or in the works of the law, or in anything without Christ whatsoever, and then that Christ alone is all his righteousness, and the horn of his salvation. In these verses that I have read unto you, the apostle first shews that if he would or thought it meet to rejoice in the flesh, he had as good cause so to do, nay, better cause so to do than any of them that rejoiced in the flesh had. 2. He shews that, albeit he might have as good confidence in the flesh as the best, yet he now counted of all those things not only as unprofitable, but as hurtful, ver. 7, 8; whereby the apostle both represseth the insolency of those false teachers that boasted so much, and yet had not so much cause as he had of boasting touching the flesh, and likewise lets the Philippians see that, seeing he, having such prerogatives above others touching the flesh, yet counted all things without Christ even but dung and loss, they also should do so, and therefore should not regard whatsoever those false teachers told them of circumcision, or of the works of the law. In general therefore, first, the apostle shews, that if he would have confidence in the flesh, he hath cause enough, so that he might, if he would, have confidence in the flesh, in these words, 'Though I might,' &c. Secondly, he shews that he hath more cause to trust in the flesh than any of these false teachers have, in these words, 'If any other,' &c. Thirdly, he proves his two former assertions by a particular recital of certain things wherein he might rejoice, in some of which he was not inferior to the best, as in circumcision, being circumcised the eighth day; in kindred, being of the kindred of Israel; in tribe, being of the tribe of Benjamin; in ancientness of stock and lineage, being an Hebrew of the Hebrews; and in profession, being a Pharisee; and in others he was before the best, as in zeal, having persecuted the church, and in righteousness, which is in the law, being unreukeable. Thus ye see the form of the apostle his proceeding, and the

division of these words into their branches. Now touching the meaning of them in more particular sort,—

First, in the first general proposition, where he saith, 'Though I might,' &c., the apostle meeteth with an objection which haply the false teachers might have made against him; and it is as if he should thus have said, Though I say that I rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, yet let no man say that it is because I have no cause of confidence in the flesh, for I have cause enough; so that if I would, I might not only, as a Christian, have my whole confidence [in] Christ, but also, as a Jew, have confidence in the flesh. Secondly, where he saith in the next general proposition, 'If any other man,' &c., the apostle, not ambitiously, but being forced thereunto by the ambition of others, compareth himself not only with these false teachers, but even with the best of the Jews; and for cause of having confidence in the flesh, if he would, he preferreth himself before the best of them. For it is as if he should thus have said, If any, I say not only of these dogs and evil workers, but if any other, even of the best of the Jews, think that he have cause of confidence in the flesh, that is, in any outward thing without Christ, I might have more cause of confidence in outward things, if I would, than he, whatsoever he be. Thirdly, where he saith in the particular recital of those things wherein he might if he would rejoice, that he was 'circumcised the eighth day,' the apostle sets down his first prerogative, common to him with other of the Jews. He was circumcised, he means in the foreskin of his flesh, therefore no Gentile; the eighth day, therefore he was no proselyte, but a natural Jew, for the proselytes, which were these that, being Gentiles, embraced the Jewish religion, they were circumcised after their conversion unto Judaism; but all the Jews were by the law circumcised the eighth day. So, then, he was no Gentile or proselyte, but a natural Jew, being circumcised the eighth day. His second prerogative, common to him with other of the Jews likewise, was, that he was of the kindred of Israel; that is, not born of parents that were proselytes, and only converted unto Jews, but of parents which were natural Jews, even of the seed of Jacob: a prerogative which the Jews stood much upon, that they were

descended of Jacob, who was called Israel, because he prevailed with God. His third prerogative, wherein he was above many of the Jews, was, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, which his tribe he mentioneth both for the dignity of his tribe, as being the tribe whence Saul, the first king of Israel, was; as also, farther, to shew himself an Israelite, whose custom it was to reckon their tribe. His fourth prerogative, wherein he yet more excelled many of the Jews, was, that he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, whereby he argues the ancientness of his stock and lineage, as being continued from Abraham, called the Hebrew, Gen. xiv. 13, or from Heber, of whom the Jews were called Hebrews, which was before the confusion of tongues at the building of Babel, Gen. x. 21, 25. His fifth prerogative, wherein he yet more excelled the most of the Jews, was, that he was by the law, *i. e.* by sect and profession, a Pharisee, the sect itself being thought the most strait sect of the Jewish religion, Acts xxvi. 5, and they more holy, and also more learned in the Scriptures, than men of other sects. His sixth prerogative, wherein he passed all the rest of the Jews, was his zeal, which was so fervent and outrageously hot, that he persecuted the church of God extremely, Gal. i. 13; or, as it is in the Acts, chap. xxii. 4, xxvi. 10, 11, ‘unto death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women; punishing them throughout all the synagogues, compelling them to blaspheme, and giving his sentence when they were put to death.’ The last prerogative here mentioned, wherein also he passed all the rest of the Jews, was, that touching the righteousness which is in the law, that is, which consisteth in the outward observation of those things which the law commanded, he was unrebukeable, to wit, before men; so precisely walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the law, as that no man could reprove him; as it is also said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6. This I take to be the meaning of the apostle thus far. Now, let us see what may be observed hence for our use and instruction.

1. Here I note the manifold and great arguments which the apostle had of confidence and rejoicing in the flesh, even so many and so great, that he might not only compare with the best of the Jews, but, all his prerogatives considered, he might more rejoice in such outward things than might any of the best of them. For look, wherein any of the best of them might rejoice, whether it were in circumcision, or in nobleness of race, or in ancient descent, or in dignity of tribe, or in profiting in the Jewish religion, therein might he also rejoice; and then for zeal, he was much more zealous of the traditions of his fathers than were any of the rest, being even mad in zeal against the Christians; and likewise for holiness of life, and religious observation of the law, he walked so well and so precisely, as that no man could except against him, or reprove him for anything that way.

Hence then I observe the wonderful wisdom of our good God, in his most wise disposing and ordering of all things for the behoof and benefit of his church. For to the end that he might bring the Jews from that vain confidence which they had in the flesh, and from that over-weaning conceit which they had of their own righteousness by the works of the law, unto confidence in Christ Jesus, and unto that righteousness which is of God through faith, to the end (I say) that he might bring the Jews from those outward things of the flesh unto the inward knowledge of Christ Jesus, he raised up to this purpose this holy apostle, that he, being a man fully furnished with all prerogatives in all such outward things as they rejoiced in, might both be of greater authority with them, and likewise have the greater possibility to draw them from works unto grace, from the law unto Christ. For if it had been so, that he had persuaded them to renounce all confidence in the flesh, and to rejoice only in Christ Jesus, having himself no cause of confidence in the flesh, they might haply have lightly esteemed him, and thought that, because himself had nothing touching the flesh whereof to rejoice, therefore he envied them, and persuaded them to renounce all confidence in the flesh. But when now they should see that he that thus persuaded them was one that had greater cause of confidence in the flesh than had the best of them, they must needs likewise see that surely his persuasions proceeded from a certain and sound judgment, and not from any conceited opinion or hateful envy. So we see that to teach men that pleasures, and sumptuous buildings, and riches, and possessions, and the like, were all but vanity and vexation of the spirit, he stirred up Solomon, who, having had his fill of all kinds of pleasures which either his eye or his heart could desire, and having built goodly houses, and great works, and having gathered great riches and treasures, and gotten large possessions above all that were before him in Jerusalem, was so fit to teach that lesson, Eccles. ii., that he, saying of all those things that they were but vanity and vexation of the spirit, the truth thereof might the rather be believed. So likewise, when the church had sat now a long time in the darkness of Romish Egypt, and had been bewitched, as with many other gross errors, so with this of justification by works, and merits of their own making, we see that, to purge the church of these pestilent diseases, he raised up not many years ago in Germany that reverend Luther, who, having been a long time more pharisaical and zealous in those monkish ways and doctrines than the common sort of his order, and having lived, as Erasmus witnesseth,* so that none of all his enemies could ever charge him with any note of just reprehension, might so much the rather prevail with the church to draw them from those dreams and dregs of superstition and idolatry wherein they were drowned. And thus oftentimes it

* Epist. lib. v. Melan. l. vi. Wolfeo.

seemeth good to the wisdom of our God, to the end that he may the rather draw his people either from errors in opinion or corruptions in life, to raise up of themselves some such as have as deeply been drenched in those errors which they maintain, and delighted as much in those follies which they follow, as they themselves; that when they shall disclaim such and such errors, or renounce such and such follies, the rest may the rather hearken unto them, and be induced by them to disclaim their errors, and to renounce their follies. Whence I make this double use:—

(1.) This may teach them whom it hath pleased the Lord to reclaim from error in opinion, or folly in life, to consider why the Lord hath thus in mercy dealt with them, and accordingly to perform such duties unto the Lord as are required of them. Art thou, then, called out of the darkness of Romish Egypt unto the glorious light of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Art thou freed from the bondage of that Romish Pharaoh into the glorious liberty of the sons of God by the day-star arising in thine heart? It is a great mercy of the Lord unto thee thus to deliver thy soul from death, and thy feet from sliding. But consider thou whether the Lord hath not also in wisdom done this, that thou having been nusled up in their superstitious errors, and as eagerly maintained them as they, shouldst now labour to draw them out of darkness into light, and from vain confidence in the flesh to rejoice in Christ Jesus. What doest thou know bnt that the Lord therefore suffered thee for a while to sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, that when afterward the day-star should arise in thine heart, thou mightest both labour the more with them, and likewise be in the better possibility to prevail with them? Follow thou, therefore, the example of this holy apostle, and labour to wean them, as from other their errors, so from confidence in their works, and in merits of their own making, that they may rejoice wholly in Christ Jesus, and only put their trust in his name. Again, hast thou haunted with vain persons, and been delighted in the company of the wicked; hast thou run with a thief when thou sawest him, and been partaker with the adulterers: hast thou given thy money unto usury, or taken reward against the innocent; have thine hands wrought, or thy feet run unto, or thy thought devised, or thy heart consented nnto this or that sin or iniquity; and hath the Lord now reclaimed thee? It is a great mercy of the Lord, 'no doubt, unto thee. But consider thou whether the Lord hath not also in wisdom done this, that thou mightest draw them with whom sometimes thou sortest thyself unto a reformation of their ways. What knowest thou but that he hath reclaimed thee from such and such inordinate ways, that, having walked with them, thou mightest be the means of reforming them? As it hath pleased the Lord, therefore, to reclaim every man from any error in opinion, or folly in life, so let him labour to reform such errors

or follies in them whom he knows to be entangled with them; ever remembering that of our Saviour unto Peter, Luke xxii. 32, 'when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;' and likewise that, James v. 20, that 'he which converteth a sinner from going astray out of his way, saveth a soul from death, and hideth a multitude of sins.'

(2.) This may teach them that are as yet holden with any error in opinion, or folly in life, to hearken unto those whom the Lord hath raised, even of themselves, to admonish them of their errors, or of their follies. For thus they should consider with themselves. He was so affected as now I am, and had as great skill and will to maintain those things which now he doth oppugn, as I have; and if the Lord have now revealed unto him that which as yet he hath kept hid from mine eyes, who am I that I should not hearken unto him? Again, he was so delighted as now I am, and did run after such sins and iniquities as he now speaketh against, as now I do, and if the Lord have now so lightened his eyes that he both seeth the folly of his own ways, and calleth me from the like, why should I not receive instruction from him? Thus (I say) they should consider, and cause their ears to hearken unto wisdom, and incline their heart unto understanding, Prov. ii. 2. But what do they? Forsooth, if such a one as was wrapped in their errors would now draw them from their errors, they disdain him the most of all other, and they cry, 'Away with the apostate,' away with the revolter, 'we will not hear him, our soul loatheth him.' And might not the Jews, even with the very same reason, have dealt so with the apostle, and so cried after him? Again, if such a one as was delighted in their follies whatsoever, would now draw them from their follies, do they not, by and by, say, 'Oh, sir, how long have you beeue of this mind? Are you so quickly become so precise, that now you cannot brook these things? Not long since you were as we are, and ere long haply will be again; in the mean time, you may talk where you may be heard, bnt we will walk in our old ways.' And might not the Jews, even with the very same reason, have said thus to the apostle? Surely, they that send away such as, arising of themselves, seek to reclaim them from their errors or their follies, with such answers, they do therein justify the Jews, neither suffer they the consideration of this wisdom of our God (whereof we have spoken) to sink into their hearts. Well, let us consider it, and as it doth or may concern us, so make these uses of it.

2. Here I note that the apostle, to repress the insolency of those that boasted in outward things without Christ, spareth not to speak of such prerogatives as he had touching the flesh, and in such to prefer himself before the best of them. Whence I observe, that in some cases the children of God may stand upon their own commendation, and are not to spare to speak of such blessings, outward or inward, as the

Lord hath bestowed upon them above their brethren. Our holy apostle, we see, did it very often. In the latter to the Corinthians, chap. xi., we see how largely he speaketh of the excellency of his ministry, of his gifts of knowledge, of his diligence in his office, of the nobleness of his birth, of the ancientness of his stock, of his patience, of his constancy, of his manifold sufferings for Christ his sake ; and in chap. xii., of his visions and revelations which were shewn him of the Lord. So likewise, in the epistle to the Galatians, chaps. i. ii., we see how he magnifieth his office and apostleship, standing upon it that he was in nothing inferior to the chief apostles, but withstanded Peter, the apostle of the Jews, to his face ; where also he boasteth of his profiting in the Jewish religion above many of his companions, and of his zealousness of the traditions of his fathers, chap. i. 14. Like places unto these we have in the Acts, chaps. xxii. xxvi., where we see the like practice of the apostle. But [what] was it that moved the apostle hereunto ? Was it ambition, and vain affectation of his own praises, that moved him ? No, surely ; he was (as himself often saith) even compelled thereunto, partly to repress the insolencies of those that laboured to undermine his authority, and partly to quit and clear himself of such false cavillations as were laid against him ; and partly to confirm such weak brethren, as such arguments of commendation might somewhat prevail with. Thus, then, we see that the children of God, warranted by the example of the apostle, may speak even freely of such blessings as the Lord in mercy towards them hath bestowed upon them above others of their brethren ; but may they, in every case, and upon every occasion, break forth into their own praises ? No, certainly they may not, but only in some cases. As (1.) when they are so vilified, and disgraced, and discountenanced, their authority so impeached, their gifts so nullified, their persons so contemned, as that thereby not only themselves are justly offended, but God's name likewise dishonoured, then may they even boast themselves of such mercies, outward or inward, as the Lord hath vouchsafed unto them. So our apostle did, when the false apostles laboured to disgrace him with the Corinthians and the Galatians, as having no authority, no gifts of knowledge, or eloquence. (2.) When they see that the proud insolency of their adversaries, that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, cannot otherwise be repressed. So our apostle did when the false apostles did so insolently brag as if they had all knowledge, and all wisdom, and all understanding. (3.) When they which otherwise should give them that testimony which is due unto them, do it not, the glory of God requiring it, then may they break out into their own praise ; and this our apostle sheweth to be one cause why he boasted himself, where he saith, 2 Cor. xii. 11, 'I was a fool to have boasted myself ; but ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you.' Because,

therefore, the Corinthians gave him not that testimony which was due unto him, therefore he was compelled to boast himself. (4.) When they see that their boasting may make for the edification of the church of Christ Jesus, then may they boast themselves ; so our apostle here boasteth himself, as to repress thereby the insolency of the false teachers, so partly to teach the Philippians, that seeing he, having such prerogatives above others touching the flesh, yet counted all those things but even dung and loss, they also by his example should do so. In all these cases the children of God may and ought to speak, and even to glory and boast, of such blessings as God hath bestowed upon them above their brethren. Touching this whole point, I give these two *cautions* : first, that they do not hunt after occasions and opportunities to praise themselves ; but that then only they do so, when they are even driven and compelled so to do by such occasions as now we have spoken of, or the like ; secondly, that when they praise themselves, being compelled thereunto, they do it not in affectation of their own praise, but for the praise and glory of Almighty God.

Here, then, let not any proud pharisee, or any ambitious Diotrephes, shroud himself under the covert of the apostle, as if his example might serve to him for any defence of his ambition, or pharisaical contempt of others. Let not that man of sin hereupon exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. All such proud, and vain, and ambitious spirits as vainly glory in their pedigree, in their honour, in their riches, in their wisdom, in their holiness, in their zeal, or the like, they savour not of Paul's spirit, but rather of Lucifer's spirit. Whosoever otherwise boast themselves than being compelled thereunto, whosoever otherwise break out into their own praises than only unto the praise and glory of God, they may well talk of Paul's boasting, but they know not what it meaneth ; and as much may be said for the proud contemning pharisee (Luke xviii. 11) as can be said for such men. Beware, therefore, of ambition and vain-glory, for it shutteth from God, as witnesseth our Saviour where he saith unto the Jews, John v. 44, 'How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God alone ?' Let us, therefore, speak with gladness of the blessings which the Lord hath vouchsafed unto us, and, if need be, let us glory and boast of them, but ever remembering that which is written, 1 Cor. i. 31, 'He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord.' To glory in the mercies of the Lord towards us, affecting our own praise and glory, is pharisaical, hypocritical, and wicked ; but in some cases so to do, to the praise and glory of God, is both lawful and very requisite.

I will end this point, if in one word I shall answer one doubt, which is, how the apostle should reckon it amongst his external praises and arguments of confi-

dence in the flesh, that he persecuted the church of God. This, no doubt, was a great and grievous sin, to persecute the church of God, as our apostle acknowledgeth, 1 Tim. i. 13, where he saith, 'I was a blasphemер, and a persecutor, and an oppressor, but I was received to mercy.' But we must remember that the apostle had to do with those that would seem to be very zealous of the law. He mentioneth, therefore, his persecution of the church, only to prove that he was as zealous of the law as the best of them; which zeal they highly accounted of, as also he did before his conversion, though now he condemned it. In respect, therefore, of them, and likewise in respect of his own opinion before his conversion, his so fervent zeal, that he persecuted the church of God, is reckoned amongst his praises. And the same is likewise to be said of all the rest, as hereafter we shall shew.

3. Here I note that the apostle, to prove that he might have confidence in the flesh, if he would, as well as the best, reckoneth whatsoever outward things the Jews most stood upon, or could indeed be stood upon, as circumcision, great kindred, ancient continuance therein even from Abraham the Hebrew, nobleness of tribe, religiousness of profession, fervency of zeal, and most precise observation of the commandments and ordinances of the law; whence I observe, that to have confidence in any outward thing without Christ whatsoever, is to have confidence in the flesh. This is proved, because whatsoever outward thing without Christ is termed flesh, both here, as this discourse proveth, and elsewhere in the very like form of speech, as where the apostle saith, 2 Cor. xi. 18, 'Seeing that many rejoice after the flesh, I will rejoice also.' Now, what are the things that here he rejoiceth in? Surely many of them the self-same things that here the apostle speaketh of, and besides, other things also, as hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, stripes, imprisonment, stoning, persecution, and the like, all which he comprehendeth in the name of *flesh*, affirming that he rejoiceth in the flesh when he rejoiceth in these things. As, then, to rejoice in any outward thing without Christ is to rejoice in the flesh, so likewise to have confidence in any outward thing without Christ is to have confidence in the flesh.

Let this, then, teach us not to have confidence in any outward thing whatsoever without Christ. Thou art baptized; it is well: so was Simon Magus, Acts viii. 13. It is 'not the putting away of the filth of the body that saveth us, but in that a good conscience maketh request to God,' 1 Pet. iii. 21. Thou hast

eaten at the Lord his table; it is well: so, no doubt, did Judas. He that eateth and drinketh worthily is made one with Christ, and Christ with him; but 'he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation,' 1 Cor. xi. 29. Thou art born of holy and godly parents; it is well: so were Ishmael and Esau. 'They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed,' Rom. ix. 8. Thou art of an holy profession; it is well: so was Demas. Holiness of profession commendeth not unto God, but an heart purified by faith which worketh through love. Thou distributest to the poor, and doest many good things; it is well: so did the pharisees, and the young man in the gospel, Mat. xix. 20. 'Though I feed the poor with all my goods, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing,' 1 Cor. xiii. 3. In a word, there is nothing under heaven without Christ that doth profit us, so that we should rejoice, or have confidence in it; for, Acts iv. 12, 'among men there is given none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved, but only by the name of Christ Jesus.' 'Let us therefore trust perfectly on the grace that is brought unto us by the revelation of Christ Jesus,' and let us have no confidence in any outward thing without Christ whatsoever, no, not in the outward action of receiving the sacrament of baptism, or of the Lord his supper. For if we have, then have we confidence in the flesh; and if we have confidence in the flesh, we rejoice not in Christ Jesus; and if we rejoice not in Christ Jesus, we worship not God in the spirit; and if we worship not God in the spirit, we are not circumcised with the true circumcision; and if we be not circumcised with the true circumcision, we belong not to the covenant of grace.

O Lord, bless thy word unto us, which now we have heard with our outward ears! Such of us as it hath pleased thee to reclaim from any error in opinion, or folly in life, make us careful of reforming such errors and follies in others; and such of us as are yet holden with any error or folly, we beseech thee so to frame us after thy will, that we may hearken unto wisdom, and incline our hearts unto understanding! Remove far from us all vain affectation of our own praises, and open our mouths to set forth thy praises, so oft as shall be meet for thy glory! Wean us, O Lord, from all confidence in any outward thing whatsoever, and settle all our confidence in thyself, and on thy Son Christ Jesus, to whom, &c.

LECTURE LIII.

But the things that were vantage unto me, the same I counted loss for Christ his sake. Yea, doubtless, I think all things loss, &c.—PHILIP. iii. 7, 8.

BUT the things, &c. In these words the apostle goeth forward, and shews that albeit he had as | good cause, and greater, of confidence and rejoicing in the flesh, and in things without Christ, than had either

those false teachers, or the best of the Jews whatsoever, yet now, since the knowledge of Christ Jesus and his righteousness was revealed unto him, he counted of all those outward things, in respect of any confidence or rejoicing in them, not only as unprofitable, but as hurtful. In these two verses, therefore (1), the apostle in general shews that howsoever sometimes he had made great reckoning of his unrebutable walking in the law of God, and of those outward things wherein the Jews gloried, yet after that he came to the knowlege of Christ Jesus, he changed his mind so far, that he counted them then not only unprofitable, but also hurtful for Christ his sake; and this he doth ver. 7. (2.) Shewing his resolute continuance in the same mind which first he had when he came to the knowlege of Christ Jesus, he doth principally amplify, and more specially explicate, that which he had said before in the latter part of the 7th verse; and this he doth verse 8. The first, ye see, is a comparison between the apostle his judgment before his knowlege of Christ, and after his knowledge of Christ; for the same things which seemed a vantage unto him before he knew Christ, afterwards he counted loss for Christ his sake. The second is principally an amplification, or more special explication, of the latter part of the comparison, wherein he goeth over and over the same terms he used, but sometimes with some diversity, for the farther and better opening of them. For whereas, ver. 7, he had said, 'the same I counted loss for Christ his sake,' ver. 8, he repeateth the same to the same purpose thrice, but with some amplification, and likewise with some alteration in the form and phrase of speech: as, first thus, 'I think all things loss for the excellent knowledge' sake of Christ Jesus my Lord'; again, thus, 'for Christ I have counted all things loss'; lastly, thus, 'I do jndge all things to be dung, that I may win Christ.' So that ye see the 8th verse is especially an amplification, or more special explication, of the later part of the comparison in ver. 7. Now from this general division and explication of these words, let us descend unto a more particular examination of the meaning of them.

1. Therefore, where the apostle saith in the comparison, 'but the things,' &c., by the things which seemed vantage unto him, he meaneth all the things before reckoned, but especially his righteousness by the law; these, as he saith, seemed unto him. When? To wit, before he knew Christ, what seemed they unto him? Vantage, *i.e.* a gain, so meritoriously profitable, as wherein he might repose the confidence of his salvation. Again, when he saith, 'the same I counted loss,' he meaneth that, after he began to know Christ, he counted those same things not only unprofitable, but also hurtful 'for Christ his sake,' *i.e.* as the apostle in the next verse expounds it, for the excellent knowledge' sake of Christ Jesus, or for the winning of Christ, because confidence in those things were hindrances thereof; so that it is as if the apostle had thus

said, My circumcision, my kindred, my tribe, my ancient descent from Abraham the Hebrew, my profession, my zeal, my righteousness in the law, were great things, and things which were in my judgment before I knew Christ so meritoriously profitable, as that I thought I might repose the confidence of my salvation in them. But the things, even these great things, that were in my judgment to me, before I knew Christ, advantage, *i.e.* so meritoriously profitable as that I thought I might repose the confidence of my salvation in them, the same things I counted, after that once I began to know Christ, loss; *i.e.* not only no advantage, but disadvantage, and hurtful for Christ his sake, *i.e.* for the attaining unto the perfect knowledge of Christ Jesus, because confidence in those things is an hindrance unto the knowledge and winning of Christ Jesus. And did I, when first I began to know Christ, count those things not only unprofitable, but hurtful, which before my conversion seemed unto me so profitable as that I might repose the confidence of my salvation in them? And do not I so still? Yes, doubtless, I am not at all altered in my judgment, but the more that I grow in the knowledge of Christ Jesns my Lord, the more that I know, not his person alone, but the infinite treasures of wisdom, righteousness, and salvation that are hid in him, the more do I think, not only all those things wherein I had confidence before I believed, but absolutely all things, even all my works since I believed, to be but loss and hindrances to the attaining of the perfect knowledge of Christ Jesus, for whom, *i.e.* for knowing of whom to my comfort, and to repose my whole confidence in him, I have counted all things loss, as being drawn by confidence in them from confidence in Christ Jesus; yea, and more than so, I do judge not only all things, wherein I rejoiced before I believed, but even all my works whatsoever, and whensoever done, to be dung, even stark nought, and worse than nought, to this end, that I may win Christ, *i.e.* that I may be more and more near joined unto him, the cloak of whose righteousness I know to be the more near at hand to cover me, the more naked that I am in myself in my own judgment. Not to trouble you longer with the opening of these words, in brief the apostle here teacheth the Philippians, by his own example, not to repose any confidence of their salvation in any their works, done either before or after their justification, but only in Christ Jesus. The reason is, because all works, done either before or after justification, are in comparison of Christ, and of any confidence to be reposed in them, but loss and dung. And let this suffice to be spoken touching the meaning of these words. Now let us see what observations we may gather for our farther use and instruction.

1. In that the apostle saith, 'the things that were vantage unto me,' &c., I note the great diversity of Paul's judgment before his conversion, and after his conversion, unto Christ; for the things that seemed vantage unto him before his conversion unto Christ,

the same things after his conversion he counted loss unto him for Christ his sake. Whence I observe the great alteration and change which the Spirit of God worketh in the heart and understanding of him whom he vouchsafeth to bring to the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. For until such time as the day-spring from on high do visit us, and the day-star of the Sun of righteousness arise in our hearts, such blindness, darkness, and ignorance possess our understandings, as that we neither do nor can perceive the things of the Spirit of God, but both we think and speak good of evil, and evil of good, and judge that to be vantage which is loss, and that to be loss which is vantage. This is plain by that of the apostle, where he saith, 1 Cor. ii. 14, that 'the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ;' where by the natural man he meaneth, the man whose heart and understanding the Lord hath not yet lightened by his Holy Spirit, who as yet is not brought unto the true knowledge of Christ ; and of him he saith, that 'he neither doth, nor can perceive the things of the Spirit of God ;' nay, more than that, that 'the things of God's Spirit are mere foolishness unto him.' Yea, so it fareth ordinarily with the natural man, that he putteth darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for sour. And if any be more careful of his ways than the rest, so that he can say with the pharisee, 'I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers ; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that ever I possess ;' if he be civilly honest, merciful, and liberal ; if he be just towards others, sober in himself, and so precisely careful of his ways as that he be unreprovable before men, hereon he sets his rest, and stands upon it, that these things are such an advantage unto him, as that God should do him great wrong if he should not save him for these things. But tell him that all these, and all the like things, are but as a staff of reed, on which if he lean it will break into shivers, and hurt him ; tell him Christ Jesus is the only rock of salvation unto all them that put their trust in him ; that there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved but only by the name of Christ Jesus, and that if he will be saved he must repose all confidence in him, and renounce all confidence in his works, or in anything without Christ whatsoever ; heretofore he will stand amazed, and with Festus, he will say to him that shall tell him thus, 'Thou art besides thyself ; much learning doth make thee mad.' Thus it falleth with us all before such time as we be renewed in the spirit of our minds ; either we take pleasure in unrighteousness, or else we repose too much confidence in our supposed righteousness, and for the wisdom of God we all count it mere foolishness and madness. But so soon as the Lord vouchsafeth by his Spirit to circumcise us with the true circumcision of Christ, so soon as the Lord gives us a new heart, and

puts a new spirit within us, then we begin to abandon the delights in the flesh, and to savour the things of the Spirit, then the case begins to be altered, and we to be quite of another judgment. For then our eyes, which were before dim and shut up, being opened and cleared, and the foggy mists of blindness, darkness, and ignorance, which covered our understandings, being expelled, then we begin to condemn our former ways, then we begin to count the things loss which before seemed a vantage unto us, and then we begin to hearken unto the things that belong unto our peace ; so that, whereas before we had confidence in the flesh, now we renounce all confidence in the flesh, and rejoice only in Christ Jesus ; whereas before we pleased ourselves much in things which we willed and did, now we see that 'in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' but that God only worketh in us both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure ; whereas before we counted the wisdom of God foolishness, now we see that our own wisdom is foolishness, and that only the wisdom of God is true wisdom. For when the Lord hath put his Spirit within us, then we 'walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments, and do them,' Ezck. xxxvi. 27 ; but before we do not. When he hath circumcised our hearts, then we love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, Deut. xxx. 6 ; before we do not. And as our apostle here saith, when we are circumcised with the true circumcision, that is, when we are regenerated by God his Holy Spirit, then we rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ; but before we have confidence in the flesh, and rejoice not in Christ Jesus. A great change and a good change, because from the worse unto the better.

Let this, then, teach us to bend the knees of our souls unto the Lord our God, for the grace of his Holy Spirit, that the bright beams of his Spirit shining into our hearts, all mists of blindness, darkness, and ignorance may be expelled thence, and we brought both unto the perfect knowledge and obedience of Christ Jesus. For if he guide us, we wander not ; if he instruct us, we err not ; if he command the light of the glorious gospel to shine unto us, then is our darkness turned into light. But otherwise our foolish hearts are full of darkness, otherwise we err and wander out of the right way wherein we should walk, and lay hold on error instead of truth, and embrace folly instead of wisdom, for it is the Spirit alone that leadeth us into all truth, John xvi. 13, and directeth us unto all wisdom, and 'but by the Spirit no man can say that Jesus is the Lord,' 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Let us, therefore, always pray for the light of God's Spirit, that it shining in our hearts, our darkness may be turned into light, our feet may be guided into the way of peace, and our eyes may be opened to see the mysteries of God's will, and the wondrous things of his law.

Secondly, in that the apostle, after that he began to know Christ, counted those things no vantage, but

loss, which before he knew Christ seemed vantage unto him, I observe that such works as we do before we be justified by faith in Christ Jesus, seem they never so good, yet they are no vantage unto us, either unto justification, or unto salvation. For what were the things that seemed vantage unto the apostle before he knew Christ? Was not one of them, and whereof he made special account, his unrebutable walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the law, his works done according to the law? The verse immediately before sheweth that he counted that one of his chief prerogatives, and yet he counted these works, done according to the law before he believed, no vantage at all unto him for his justification or salvation by Christ Jesus. Now, if the apostle so judged of his works done according to the law before he believed, this may be a sure proof unto us, that such works as are done before grace and faith in Christ Jesus, seem they never so good, yet they are no vantage unto us, either unto our justification or unto our salvation. Well, they may have a show and semblance of vantage unto us, but indeed they are no vantage unto us, either to prepare us to the grace of justification, or to move the Lord to shew mercy on us, and save us; for 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6; and without the knowledge of Christ there is no salvation; for this is eternal life, to know God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ, John xvii. 3; so that our works done before we believe, and before we be brought to the knowledge of Christ Jesus, cannot be anyway any merit why we should be justified, or why we should be saved.

Let this, then, teach us to beware of such deceivers as tell us that such works, though they suffice not to salvation, yet are acceptable preparatives to the grace of justification, and such as move God to mercy; for if they were such preparatives, or if they did move God to mercy, how should they not be some advantage unto us? which the apostle here plainly denieth. They talk, I know, of Cornelius his prayers and alms-deeds, Acts x. 4; as if they had been works done before faith, and yet acceptable with God. But the text itself in that place is sufficient to confute them; for there it is said that he was a devout man, ver. 2, and one that feared God with all his household, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed unto God continually; all evident arguments that, as a true proselyte, he believed in the Messiah, howsoever he was not yet baptized, nor perfectly instructed: so that his prayers and his alms-deeds were not preparations and dispositions unto faith and justification, but they were the fruits of his faith and justification already begun. Of the like validity are whatsoever arguments they bring to this purpose. Howsoever, therefore, they tell you that works done before faith or justification are acceptable unto God, or dispositions unto grace, or motives unto mercy, or merits in congruity, or whatsoever other advantage, yet ye see that the apostle is clear in the point, that all the prerogatives

that any man hath, and all the good works that any man doth before he know Christ, they are no vantage to him at all to justification or salvation. Yea, further know, that they who make other account of such works, thereby shew that indeed as yet they do not truly know Christ; for this is a plain testimony that as yet they are not come unto the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, if as yet they count such works to be a vantage unto grace or life. Hearken therefore not unto them, neither give ye any place unto their error.

It followeth that hence also I should observe, that such works are not only no vantage, but loss, for Christ his sake. But the general in the verse following comprehending this particular, I have thought good only to speak of it in the general, and so to conclude the point touching works.

Thirdly, therefore, in that the apostle saith in the next verse, 'Yea, doubtless, I think all things but loss, &c., and do judge them to be dung,' &c., I observe that generally all our works done according to the law, whether before or after faith and justification, seem they never so good, by reposing any confidence of salvation in them, are not only no vantage, but loss; yea, but dung, such as were far more meet that we should be purged of them, than that we should repose any confidence in them. For, that generally all works are here to be understood, it is plain by the apostle in this place: first, because, having spoken in the former verse of works done before faith and justification, here he useth a more general word, comprising both those and what works else soever; as if he had said, Yea, doubtless, now that I am grown up in further knowledge of Christ Jesus, I now think, not only things which either I had or did before I knew Christ, but even all things generally, even all my works whatsoever, and whensover done, 'to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge,' &c.; 'to be but dung, that I might win Christ.' Secondly, because the apostle saith, that he doth judge all things to be dung, that he might now win Christ; he had already won Christ; but his meaning is, that to the end he might more and more win him, to the end that he might more and more nearly be joined unto him, he counted all his own righteousness, even which now he had by any present works of his, to be but loss, to be but dung: so that all works done either before or after that we be justified by faith are here meant. What then? Are all our works whatsoever, and whensover done, simply to be judged loss and dung? No surely, not in respect of the substance of the works that are done; for fasting, prayers, alms-deeds, righteousness, judgment, mercy, and the like fruits of faith, are good works, and pleasing unto God, both commanded and rewarded by him. But both these, and whatsoever our best works, are to be judged loss, and even dung, that is, in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, and of that righteousness which we have by faith in him; for what are all things in the world

in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus? or what is man's righteousness, that it should be compared unto the righteousness of Christ Jesus? Christ is our life, Col. iii. 4; and to know him as he is revealed by the light of his glorious gospel, is everlasting life, John xvii. 3. What shall we, then, compare unto this excellent knowledge? Nay, let us not esteem to know anything save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; in comparison of this knowledge, let all things in the world seem loss and even dung unto us. Likewise what is man's righteousness in comparison of his righteousness? Surely as darkness in respect of the sun in his brightness; for it is as himself, white and ruddy, and wholly delectable, without blemish, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and what else is our best righteousness but as the menstrual cloths of a woman, full of filthiness, and slurred with much uncleanness? So that, in comparison of Christ his righteousness, it may well be counted loss, and compared unto dung, fit for nothing but the dunghill. Secondly, in respect of any confidence to be reposed in them, all our very best works generally whatsoever are but loss, but dung. The reason is, because confidence in them stays us from that confidence which we ought to have in Christ Jesus; for the more that we rejoice and secure ourselves in our own righteousness, which is by works, the less we care for coming unto Christ, to be clad with his righteousness. Witness the apostle, where, shewing the cause of the ruin of the Jews, Rom. x. 3, he saith that, 'they being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not themselves unto the righteousness of God.' Whence it is plain, that to soothe up ourselves in a conceit of our own righteousness, is the very way to stay us from seeking the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. And what else meaneth that of our Saviour unto the pharisees, where he calleth them that the publicans and harlots shall go before them into the kingdom of God? Mat. xxi. 31. The meaning is not, that the wicked and lewd life of the publicans and harlots did more commend them unto God than did the religious and strict life of the pharisees; but thereby our Saviour giveth them to understand, that because of their conceit and confidence in their own righteousness, they were further from the kingdom of God than were the greatest sinners that were; so that there was more hope of the greatest sinners that were, that they would sooner come to repentance, and sooner come unto him, than would they that had confidence in their own works, and in their own righteousness. The more confidence, then, that we have in our own works, and in our own righteousness, the more strangers we are from Christ and his righteousness. If we cleave wholly to our works, as thinking to be justified or saved by them, we are wholly separated from Christ Jesus, and have no part in that salvation which is by grace through faith in his name; or, if we cleave in

part unto our works, then do we diminish the glory of Christ Jesus. Nay, I say more, if we cleave in part unto our works, we have no part in Christ, or in salvation by him; which, I take it, is plain by that of our apostle, verse 3 of this chapter, where he saith, 'We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;' as if he should have said, If we should have confidence in the flesh, then should we not rejoice in Christ Jesus. The conclusion, then, must needs be, that all our works, by reposing confidence in them, how good soever they seem to be, are indeed loss and hurtful unto us; for what more hurtful than to withhold us from coming unto Christ?

Unto these of the apostle let me add a third respect, whereunto also even all our works generally are but loss and dung, which is in respect of the quality of our works in themselves; for, if our best works should be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, they would be found too light; if they should be examined after the strict rule of God's justice, they would make us lift up our voices with David, Ps. cxlii. 2, and say, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified'; for 'who can bring a clean thing out of filthiness? there is not one that can do it,' John xiv. 4. How good therefore, how righteous, and holy soever we be, yet must we know that 'all our righteousness is but as filthy cloths,' out of the prophet, Isa. lxv. 6. Whether therefore we compare our works, and our righteousness by works, with the knowledge of Christ, and the righteousness which we have by faith in his name; or whether we respect the reposing of any part of our confidence in them; or whether we respect our works in themselves, if they should be examined by the law of God; we see that they are no vantage, but loss, and, as the apostle termeth them, dung. Which doctrine, how true, and likewise how necessary it is, the apostle his insisting and beating upon it doth evidently shew; for ye see that the three several repetitions hereof taketh up this whole verse almost.

What then? Do we condemn good works; do we make this account of them, that so we may banish them out of the country? So some tell you, but most untruly; for in all places we exhort all men that they abound in every good work, and we give all encouragement thereunto; we tell you that good works are the way which God hath ordained that we should walk in unto heaven, and that without holiness of life no man shall see the Lord; we tell you that God commandeth them, that God rewardeth them, that God is well pleased with them, and that they are truly good works, though they be not perfectly good works; yea, we tell you that they are accounted unto us as perfectly good, because whatsoever imperfection is in them is for Christ his sake covered, and not imputed unto us. Thus we have learned, and therefore thus we tell you. Also we tell you that ye are not to repose any confidence of your salvation in them, but all in

Christ Jesus ; that they are to be counted but loss and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, and of his righteousness ; that our works, be they never so good, do not make us righteous before God ; that we are saved not of works, but by grace through faith in Christ Jesus ; and that none of all our works can abide the severity of God's judgment, much less merit any grace at God's hands. Thus also we have learned, and therefore thus also we tell you. And do we condemn good works because we teach you the truth touching good works ? We desire and we pray that ye may abound in all knowledge, and in every good work ; but we are jealous that you should not grow to an overweening conceit of them. Good works must be done, but we must not trust to be justified or saved by them, because that honour only belongeth unto God.

Let this teach us to renounce all confidence in our own works, and in our own righteousness whatsoever, and to beware of them that tell us that our works are meritorious and worthy of heaven ; for if we flatter ourselves with a proud and pharisaical conceit of our own righteousness by our works, we shall depart home justified* as the pharisee, Luke xviii. 14. We must therefore come unto Christ, as the publican, confessing our own unrighteousness, and acknowledging our own nakedness in ourselves, if we will be clothed with the long white robe of his righteousness ; for ' he filleth the hungry with good things, but sendeth away the rich empty ; ' he came not to call or to clothe the righteous in their own conceit, but he justifieth the wicked and clotheth the naked ; for he respecteth the humble and lowly, but for the proud he beheldeith them afar off. Let us therefore humble ourselves in ourselves, and only rejoice in Christ Jesus. If we do anything that is good, it is not of ourselves, but only from grace ; and if we receive a reward for any good that we do, it is not for the merit of the work, but of the mercy of the Lord : for we must still hold that rule of our Saviour, that when we have done all that we can, yet must we say, ' We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which was our duty to do,' Luke xvii. 10. Now, unprofitable servants, what merit they ? or, they which only do their duty, what merit they ? Surely other merit of any works we know none, but of death. If therefore we will be made righteous before God, let us renounce all merit of grace by our own works, all confidence in our own righteousness. Let us abound

* That is, 'no more justified than the pharisee was ;' or, query, 'unjustified' ?—ED.

in every good work ; but for righteousness, and salvation, let us run unto our Christ, for ' he is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. Let us be ready to do good, and to distribute, and to procure things honest both before God and men ; and let us assure ourselves that a cup of cold water given in Christ his name shall not lose his reward. But let no man say in his heart, or think with himself, that it is for his righteousness and the merit of his works ; for if he so justify himself, the Lord shall condemn him, and judge him wicked. To cease to do evil, to learn to do well, to seek judgment, to relieve the oppressed, to judge the fatherless, to defend the widow, to fast, to watch, to pray, to be just, merciful, and liberal, to feed the hungry with our morsels, to clothe the naked with our fleece, to comfort the sick, and to help the troubled in their distress, are all good works, odours that smell sweet, sacrifices acceptable and pleasant unto God. Let our faith work by such love, and let our knowledge be filled with such fruits of righteousness. Such works God accepteth well at our hands, though he do not accept us for our works, but only in his well-beloved Son Christ Jesus. In a word, let us always be occupied in doing that which is good, but let us not repose any confidence of our salvation at all in any good that we do.

The last thing which I observe is, the reason why the apostle counted all things whatsoever but loss and dung, which was 'for Christ his sake,' 'for the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus,' 'that he might win Christ, and that he might be found in him,' &c. Here was his vantage, here was his gain, here was his merit ; and for the gaining of this pearl he would willingly sell or lose all that ever he had. But I must defer to speak of this point at this time.

O Lord our God, grant unto us, we humbly beseech thee, the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that the bright beams thereof, shining into our hearts, all mists of blindness, darkness, and ignorance may be expelled thence, and we enabled to see the mysteries of thy will, and the wondrous things of thy law ! Humbly us, O Lord, in ourselves, we humbly beseech thee, that we, seeing and knowing our own unworthiness and unrighteousness, may sue from ourselves, unto thee, and in thee may find rest unto our souls ! Increase, O Lord, our knowledge in thee, and our obedience unto thee, that our knowledge being filled with the fruits of righteousness, and our faith working by love, we may be known truly to belong unto thee !

LECTURE LIV.

And that I may be found in him : that is, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through, &c.—PHILIP. III. 9.

IT remaineth now that we see what it was that the apostle counted vantage unto him, for which he

counted all things else in the world but loss and dung. It was the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus his

Lord that he counted vantage unto him, for which he counted all things else but loss and dung. For the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, that he might win him, and that he might be found in him, he thought all things loss, and judged all things to be dung. Where, 1, Let us see what is meant by the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ; 2, how all things else are to be judged loss for the excellent knowledge' sake of Christ Jesus; 3, what the excellency and vantage is of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus.

1. Touching the first, we must understand that there is a threefold knowledge of Christ: one by the law in the Old Testament, another by the gospel in the New Testament, and a third in heaven, when we shall see him face to face. (1.) In the law, Christ was figured by the heavenly manna, by the rock in the wilderness, by the brazen serpent, by the paschal lamb, by the rites, and ceremonies, and sacrifices of the law. Of his coming, Jacob spake in the blessing of Judah, Gen. xlix. 10, and Balaam likewise in his prophecy of the great prosperity that should come unto Israel, Numb. xxiv. 17; of his incarnation, and birth of a virgin, Isaiah prophesied, Isa. vii. 14; of his conception by the Holy Ghost, Daniel is thought to have prophesied, Dan. ix. 24; of the place of his birth Micah prophesied, Micah v. 2; of his kingdom and government, Isaiah prophesied, Isa. ix. 6, 7; of his preaching and office as he was a prophet, Isaiah also prophesied, chap. lxi. 1-3; of his infirmities and sorrows, and of his oblation and sacrifice of himself as he was our priest, Isaiah likewise prophesied, chap. liii.; yea, so full-fraught with arguments touching Christ were both the books of Moses and the writings of the prophets, especially of Isaiah, that in this respect it may be well said, as I think, that 'the law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,' Gal. iii. 24. So that ye see Christ might be known by the law in the Old Testament. But this knowledge of Christ is compared by the apostle Peter unto a light, or 'candle that shineth in a dark place,' 2 Peter i. 19. An obscure knowledge it is, and such as, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ by the gospel, is as darkness in comparison of light.

(2.) The second knowledge, then, of Christ is by the gospel of Christ in the New Testament, where we see plainly that fulfilled which before was prophesied of Christ Jesus. There we know not his person only, that he is the everlasting Son of the Father, that he is both God and man, that he is very God of very God, begotten before all worlds, and that he is very man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world, perfect God and perfect man, subsisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh; but there also we know that he came from the bosom of his Father for us; that he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant for us; that in infirmities, and sorrows, and sufferings, and affections, and passions of the mind, and in all things

he was like unto us, sin only excepted, that he might be merciful unto us; that he humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross, for us; that he overcame the powers of death, and rose again, and ascended into heaven for us; that he hath paid the price of our sins, and freed us from the bondage of sin, death, and the devil; that he as our priest liveth for ever, and sitteth at the right hand of his Father to make continual intercession for us; that he as our King continually protecteth and preserveth us; that he as our prophet by his word, the word of our salvation, teacheth us; that in him we are accepted and beloved; that for him God's blessings are showered down upon us; that he is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that there is no condemnation unto them that are in Christ Jesus; and that by faith in him, we are made one with him, and he with us: all this, and much more touching Christ, we know by the glorious light of the gospel which hath shined in our hearts, 1 Peter i. 19. And this is that knowledge which the apostle here calleth the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus; excellent indeed above all other knowledge, and excellent even as much as our life and salvation is worth. And this knowledge of Christ is compared by the apostle Peter unto 'the day-star.' An excellent knowledge, and such as is so much more glorious than the knowledge of Christ by the law, as is the light and brightness of the day-star more glorious than the light and brightness of a candle.

(3.) The third knowledge of Christ is in heaven, when we shall see him face to face, which is the most excellent knowledge of Christ of all the rest. For then shall we see him as he is; then shall we enjoy the continual fruition of his presence; then shall we see the name written upon his thigh, 'The King of kings, and Lord of lords'; then shall that knowledge, which is now only in part, be fully perfected. And this knowledge of Christ is compared unto the sun in her brightness, and is as much more excellent than the second, as the second is than the first. Now the knowledge of Christ Jesus, of which the apostle here speaketh, is not this last, nor the first knowledge of Christ, but the second, which he calleth excellent, both in itself and in respect of his first knowledge of Christ; for he had before a general and obscure dark knowledge of Christ by the books of Moses and the writings of the apostles,* being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but that was nothing in respect of this; this was the excellent knowledge, and for this excellent knowledge' sake he counted both his former knowledge, and all things else, to be but loss and dung.

Now how all things are to be judged loss and dung for the excellent knowledge' sake of Christ Jesus, that is in the next place to be considered. Birth, kindred, nobility, wealth, learning, knowledge, holiness of life,

* Qu. 'prophets'?—Ed.

righteousness, temperance, sobriety, and the like, even all outward things, and all our works whatsoever, are all to be judged loss and dung for the excellent knowledge's sake of Christ Jesus. What then? Must we renounce birth, kindred, nobility, and the like? Must we make away our wealth and riches, and vow a voluntary poverty? Must we remit all care of learning and knowledge, and instead thereof embrace ignorance? Must we leave off to follow after holiness of life, righteousness, temperance, sobriety, and the like? Must we cease from good works, if we will be partakers of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus? No such matter. Paul needed not to renounce his tribe, his kindred, his noble parentage; neither was he to grow dissolute, or negligent in the observation of the commandments and ordinances of the law, that he might come to the knowledge of Christ. His circumcision was commanded, his tribe and kindred were worthy prerogatives, and his works done according to the law were very commendable. He was not therefore simply to renounce, or clearly to abjure, all those things, but only to renounce all confidence in these things if he would be a Christian. Right so it is to be said generally. Is any man noble and great by birth and parentage? So were many godly kings of Israel and Judah. But therein we may not secure ourselves, as if therefore we needed to fear no evil. Is any man rich and wealthy? So was Abraham and Lot; but 'if riches increase,' let no man 'set his heart upon them,' let no man 'trust in uncertain riches.' Is any man holy, righteous, which feareth God, and aboundeth in every good work? So were the saints of God, therefore renowned in the holy Scriptures, and let him that is such be such still. 'He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.' Yea, let every man labour and strive still more and more to increase in all knowledge and understanding in every good thing, and in every good work. But let no man rejoice or put any confidence of his salvation in these things, but as it is written, 'He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord.' How then are all these outward things to be judged loss and dung? Certainly not in respect of the substance of the things, or of the good works which are done. For the things such as we have spoken of, as honour, riches, wisdom, learning, knowledge, and the like, are the good gifts, and blessings of the Lord, thankfully to be enjoyed and used to his glory; and likewise good works are commanded and rewarded by God, and are well-pleasing in his sight, as the apostle witnesseth, where he saith, Heb. xiii. 16, 'To do good and to distribute forget not: for with such sacrifices God is pleased.' It is not, then, in respect of the substance of these outward things that they are to be judged to be loss and dung, but they are to be judged loss and dung in respect of any confidence to be reposed in them; for better it is that we wanted them, than that we should repose any trust

or confidence in them. For besides that they are as a staff of reed, on which if a man lean it will break into shivers, and hurt him, confidence in them doth stay us and hinder us from coming unto Christ, and reposing that confidence in him which we ought to have in him. Which is plainly proved by that of the apostle, and that of our Saviour, which I mentioned the last day. For the apostle maketh this the reason why the Jews submitted not themselves unto the righteousness of God, because they went about to establish their own righteousness. Rom. x. 3, 'They,' saith he 'being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God.' What was the cause of their blindness and ignorance of the righteousness of God? What was the cause why they submitted not themselves unto the righteousness of God? Here it was: they went about to establish their own righteousness; they had a great conceit of their own works done according to the law; they thought themselves righteous by them, and therefore they cared not for coming unto Christ, nor sought not after the righteousness of God in him. And this was the very cause why our Saviour told the pharisees that the publicans and the harlots should go before them into the kingdom of God, Mat. xxi. 31. The pharisees had a proud conceit, and a very great confidence in their own righteousness, insomuch that they justified themselves above all other men. And therefore our Saviour hereby gives them to understand that they are farther from the kingdom of God than the greatest sinners that are, because there is more hope of the greatest sinners that are, that they will sooner come to Christ, and sooner to repentance, than those that have such a conceit of their works, and such a confidence in their own righteousness by the works of the law. Such an enemy unto Christ is confidence in any outward thing without Christ. It stays us from coming unto Christ, from the knowledge of Christ, and from confidence in Christ Jesus; for if we secure ourselves, and rest ourselves in ourselves, we come not unto Christ: coming not unto him we know him not; knowing him not, we repose not the confidence of our salvation in him. In respect, therefore, of any confidence to be reposed in them, we must judge them loss and dung. This quality of confidence in them, of trust to be made righteous by them, is that that the apostle disputes against, and that that we must quite renounce. Touching all outward things therefore without Christ whatsoever, I say unto you, set not your hearts upon them, secure not yourselves in them, set not your affections upon them, repose no confidence in them. Wealth, honour, strength, wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness are the good gifts and blessings of the Lord; enjoy them thankfully, and use them to the honour and glory of our God; but be not puffed up with any conceit of merit or confidence in these things. For howsoever they

might haply seem sometimes vantage unto you, yet if ye be come to the true knowledge of Christ Jesus, ye must judge them to be loss and dung in respect of any confidence to be reposited in them. Abound, then, in every good work to the glory of almighty God, but repose no confidence of your salvation at all in any good that ye do, but only in Christ Jesns.

2. They are to be judged loss and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus; for such is the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, that to gain that, we should sell all that ever we have; nay, if we lose all that ever we have, we should not care, if we gain that. The man, ye know, that is tossed and turmoiled with the troublesome storms of the seas, when it comes to that that either he must wreck and never come into the haven, or else he must disburden his ship of her lading, he quickly makes his choice, and casts all into the sea, and counts all but loss in comparison of his life. So we see in Paul's dangerous voyage towards Rome, when he and they that were with him were tossed with an exceeding tempest, they lightened the ship, and cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship, Acts xxvii. 18, 19, choosing rather to lose all their wares, and all that was in the ship, than to lose their lives. So we, in comparison of this excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, whom to know is life everlasting, must account of nothing that we have in the world, but in the comparison of all other things with this, we must count them all but loss in comparison of this; yea, we must make this account, that it is better for us utterly to be despoiled and deprived of all things than of this one thing, the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Nay, we must go farther than the mariner or merchant, for he casteth out his wares because he had rather live, though poorly, than perish with his wares in the waters; but he is so far from contemning his wares or his wealth, that when he comes into the haven he sorrows for his wealth perished in the waters. But we must contemn all other things, and count them not only as loss, but as dung, and most vile and abject in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ; and when we have lost all things, if we have this excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, we must still so rejoice herein, as that we make no other account of all other things than trash and naught. Albeit therefore it be not always needful quite and utterly to dispossess ourselves of all outward things, that we may come to the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, yet must we be thus affected both towards the one and the other, as that we both more care for this than for all things else, and contemn and count all things else but dung in comparison of this.

3. Which account that we may the rather make, let us in the third place see what the excellency and the vantage is of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. 'Many daughters have done virtuously,' saith Solomon, describing the conditions of a virtuous and godly woman,

Prov. xxxi. 29, 'but thou surmountest them all.' So I say of knowledge, many knowledges of many things are most excellent, and of rare commendation, and to be sought after more than the most precious things else whatsoever; but the knowledge of Christ Jesus far excelleth, and far surmounteth them all. This our Saviour Christ plainly witnesseth, where he saith unto his disciples, Mat. xiii. 17, 'Verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' The prophets and other holy men of God had seen long before in the Spirit, and by faith, those things which the disciples then saw; for it is said, John. viii. 56, that 'Abraham saw Christ his day and rejoiced'; he saw it afar off with the eyes of faith, and rejoiced. But our Saviour far preferreth the sight and hearing of him which now his disciples had after his coming in the flesh, before that which the prophets and other holy men of God had of him before his coming in the flesh; which plainly sheweth that the knowledge of Christ Jesus, by the light of the glorious gospel, far excelleth that knowledge in the Old Testament, and much more all knowledge else whatsoever. Much to the same purpose is that testimony of our Saviour touching John Baptist, where he maketh him the greatest of them that went before him, but the least in the kingdom of heaven to be greater than he was, Mat. xi. 11; whereas the meaning is, that the preaching of John Baptist was much better and clearer than the preaching of the prophets, because he pointed at the Lamb of God now ready to be offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and yet the preaching and message of every minister in the New Testament, is better and clearer than the preaching and message of John Baptist, because that by their message and ministry, the knowledge of Jesus Christ is better and more clearly opened. Yea, and that which yet more commendeth the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, is that the angels themselves desire to behold this mystery of man's redemption and salvation by Christ Jesus, which yet they see not, but we see into by the knowledge of Christ Jesus revealed in his glorious gospel. What shall I speak of those manifold titles given hereunto in the New Testament, as that it is called 'the mystery of God,' 'the mystery of the kingdom of God,' 'the mystery of Christ,' 'the mystery of God the Father and of Christ,' 'the mystery kept secret from the beginning of the world,' &c.: all which do wonderfully commend the excellency of this knowledge, being made known unto none, but unto whom the Father doth reveal it by his Spirit. 'For no man knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father doth reveal him by his Spirit,' Mat. xi. 27. I will not farther stand to amplify the excellency of this knowledge, either by speaking of that ignorance which is opposite unto this knowledge, or by comparing of

this knowledge with any other knowledge whatsoever. Through the ignorance of this knowledge of Christ Jesus are the Gentiles 'strangers from the life of God,' Eph. iv. 18. Excellent, then, is this knowledge, whereby we live in God and God in us. Again, the knowledge of God in the Old Testament, in comparison of this knowledge by the gospel in the New Testament, is but as darkness in comparison of the light. For as Moses shewed the law, the Jews' eyes were not lightened, but blinded; but by the light of the gospel, all darkness is driven from our eyes, as the apostle sheweth, 2 Cor. iii. What then is any knowledge, that it should be compared with the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus? Not, therefore, to compare it with any, as being incomparably beyond all, even in itself ye see it is most excellent; desired of the prophets and holy patriarchs, desired of the holy angels, and revealed unto none but unto whom the Father doth reveal it by his Holy Spirit. But most excellent it is to be judged by us in respect of that vantage which it is unto us.

What is, then, the vantage of the knowledge of Christ Jesus unto us? Surely even as much as our life and salvation is worth; for 'this is eternal life,' saith our Saviour in his prayer to his Father, John xvii. 3, 'to know thee to be the only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ;' where the meaning is, that the knowledge of Christ Jesus entereth us into the possession of eternal life; for this we must know, that howsoever we have a name that we live, yet indeed in respect of the life of God we are dead, until such time as 'God, that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts,' and bring us by the light of the glorious gospel unto the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and then when we come unto the knowledge of Christ Jesus by the illumination of God's Spirit, then we take entrance of the possession of eternal life; which I take it our Saviour Christ also signifieth where he saith, John v. 25, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour shall come, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live;' for when he saith, 'the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God,' he meaneth that before such time as we hear the voice of the Son of God, whereby we come unto the true knowledge of him, we are dead spiritually, we live not the life of God. And again, when he saith, that 'they that hear it shall live,' his meaning is, that then only we begin to live the life of God, and to take possession of eternal life, when we hear his voice, and thereby come to the true knowledge of him. A notable vantage that this knowledge of Christ Jesus brings unto us. But what knowledge of Christ Jesus is it that is this advantage unto us? Not the knowledge of his person only, but what he is made of God unto us, which I called before the second knowledge of Christ. To know that he was born, lived and died for us, to know that he is our wisdom, and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption;

to know the virtue of his death and resurrection; to know that he is the reconciliation for our sins, that he is the salvation of our souls; that by him and for him we have and receive all the good blessings of God, whether belonging to this life, or that that is to come; to know that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and salvation, so that having him we have all riches, and wanting him, whatsoever riches we seem to have, we have nothing; thus to know him is a vantage unto us: for if we thus know him, we believe in him, we love, and we keep his commandments; and herein is life, and without this is nothing else but death.

Is this, then, the excellency, and is this the vantage of the knowledge of Christ Jesus? What diligence should this stir us up unto after the means whereby we may come unto this knowledge of Jesus Christ? What reverence and attention should it work in us, when the mystery of this knowledge is opened unto us by the ministry of his servants? And yet behold how, where the light of this knowledge shineth most clearly, men do yet love darkness better than light! It may be spoken to the shame of this whole town, it may be spoken to the shame of a great many of this congregation, that they love darkness better than light, that they had rather lie drowned in the ignorance of Christ Jesus, than be taught in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; for what frequenting is there by them of those places where they should be taught in this knowledge! Three or four sermons may commonly be heard weekly. Of so many thousands as are in this town, how many hundreds, nay, how many scores, come to hear them weekly, nay, come to hear any of them weekly? If it should be said, as it was to Abraham at the destruction of Sodom, if there be fifty religious men within the city that hearken unto my voice, and thirst after the word of their salvation as the hart thirsteth after the brooks; if forty-five, if thirty, if twenty, if ten, I will spare it, and remove from it my sore plagues of famine and sickness; would we not think it a hard matter if so many should not be found in this city, which might well be as Goshen, where there should be light, though darkness were round about it? I say not that so many cannot be found, for I do not know so much; but this I say, that too few such there are to be found amongst us. In this congregation, what slackness and negligence is there in a great many either of frequenting other places or this! Beloved, the holy patriarchs and the prophets desired that knowledge of Jesus Christ, which now ye may have; and care ye not for it? Yea, the angels do even yet desire to look into it, and will ye not? What is the matter? Doth this word of your salvation distaste in your mouths? Do ye not relish it? It is a token that ye are sick, and ye had need to look unto it; for the sickness is unto death, even unto the second death. Have ye surfeited of it, and had too much of it? Queasy stomachs, and quickly

surcharged. Soon we have too much of that whereof we can never have enough. When our Saviour had told the woman of Samaria, that whosoever should drink of the water that he gave him, should never be more athirst; 'Sir,' saith she, 'give me of the water, that I may not thirst nor come hither to draw,' John iv. 14, 15. Beloved, we have told you that the word which we bring unto you is the word of life, the word of your salvation, the word of your reconciliation; and yet what slackness and negligence is there in coming to the hearing of this word! Few there are that come to beg this heavenly manna; few that come to take it when we reach it out unto them. Beloved, again we tell you, that the knowledge of Christ Jesus, wherein our heart's desire is to instruct you, is your entrance into the possession of eternal life and salvation; it is as much as your life and salvation is worth. Will you live the life of God in this life, and for ever in the life to come? Come, then, and learn to know Christ Jesus. Come and learn to know what great things he hath done for you, and what duty again he doth require of you. If you be rich in this knowledge, ye are rich indeed; if ye be instructed in this knowledge, ye are learned indeed; if ye be mighty in this knowledge, ye are mighty indeed. If ye have this, ye want nothing; if ye want this, ye have nothing. Oh ye that will be rich and wealthy, seek after these riches; ye that will be wise and learned, seek after this learning; ye that will be great and mighty, seek to be mighty in this knowledge. Whatsoever other wealth and riches ye have, whatsoever other wisdom or learning, whatsoever other might or power, all things are but loss and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus. Know him, and know all things; know him not, and know nothing. As, therefore, ye love your salvation in Christ Jesus, so labour to come unto, and to grow up in the knowledge of, Christ Jesus. To know him is life eternal, not to know him is death eternal. Why will ye die, when by the power of him ye may live? If ye know not, ye shall die; but know and live. One word of that which is added.

Of Christ Jesus my Lord. What doth the apostle mean to call Jesus Christ his Lord? Was he his Lord alone? Was he not their Lord also to whom he wrote? Why doth he not say 'of Jesus Christ

our Lord?? If he had lived now, and spoken thus, he should have had many such questions as these, and he should have been sure of many sharp censures for thus appropriating this title of Jesus Christ the Lord unto himself. But thus he spake in the vehemency of his affection. And if he had now lived, would he have spoken otherwise? No; though he had been called puritan for his pains. I observe it the rather, to note what a strange humour we are now grown unto; for if any man shall now say, 'Forsake me not, O Lord my God,' 'Be merciful unto me, O Lord my God,' 'I thank my God for his mercies,' 'I think all things loss for the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,' is he not nicked in the head by and by, and noted for such a man? Yea, now it is almost come to pass, that, let a man be religious, devout in prayer, reverent in hearing the word, careful to meditate thereon afterwards, one that feareth an oath, one that cannot patiently hear corrupt communication, one that will not run into the same excess with others, a puritan I warrant him. A pitiful case, that a man speaking as the Holy Ghost speaketh, and doing as all men are commanded to do, should be branded with an odd and odious name! I wish that we would all of us both frame our speeches as the Holy Ghost hath taught us, and our actions as the Holy Ghost hath commanded us, more than we do. If any shall seem unto himself pure and holy, the Lord shall judge him wicked and impure. But let every one of us study to be pure and holy in all our words, and in all our works; and let every one of us labour by all means to have this testimony sealed unto our souls, that Jesus Christ is our Lord.

O Lord our God, we humbly thank thee for that knowledge of thy Son which thou hast already vouchsafed unto us. Vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to increase in us this knowledge daily more and more! Open our dim eyes, we beseech thee, that we may daily more and more see the excellency, and the vantage of this knowledge, that so we may daily more and more grow up in all love thereof! Purge us, we beseech thee, of all such affections as may be any hindrances hereunto, that so, growing up daily more and more in thee, at length we may reign with thee in the kingdom of thy Son Christ Jesus for ever!

LECTURE LV.

And that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, &c.—PHILIP. III. 9.

NOW the apostle goeth on, beating still upon the same reason why he counteth all his works whatsoever, and whencesoever done, and all outward things whatsoever, to be but loss and dung. 'I do judge them,' saith he, 'to be dung,' even contemptible and loathsome, being so far from being loath to lose

them, as that I despise and loathe them. Why? That I may win Christ, that is, that I may have the fruition and the possession of Christ in this life by faith, and that I may be found in him in that last and great day. How found in him? To wit, not having mine own righteousness, not clothed with mine own righteous-

ness, which is of the law, that is, by the observation and works of the law, but being clothed with that righteousness which is not through works, but through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God through faith, that is, which God doth impute unto me through faith in Christ Jesus. So that ye see the apostle still runs upon Christ, Christ, Christ; for Christ, for the excellent knowledge' sake of Christ, that he may win Christ, that he may be found in Christ; he thinks all his works, all things absolutely to be loss, and judgeth them to be dung. 'I judge them to be dung.' Here he plainly renounceth all confidence in all things without Christ whatsoever, and plainly disclaimeth all vantage, all merit, all righteousness by his works. 'That I may win Christ.' Here is the cause why he disclaims all righteousness by his works, because, otherwise, he could not win Christ; for he doth it that he may win Christ, and may be found in him. This, also, is a part of the cause why he disclaims all righteousness by his works, because, otherwise, he could not be found in Christ in that day. Why not? What is it to be found in Christ? The apostle shews that, to be found in Christ, is to be found not clothed with his own righteousness which is by the works of the law, but clothed with that righteousness which is Christ's, and only ours through faith in Christ, even that righteousness which God doth impute unto us through faith in his name. So that, he that will be found in Christ in that day, must disclaim his own righteousness, and renounce it as dung and rottenness, and must cleave only unto the righteousness of Christ Jesus, which God doth impute unto him through faith in him. The sum, then, of that which the apostle tells the Philippians in these words, is, that he now at this present, in the state wherein he now stands, doth judge all things, even his very best present works, to be so far from any part of his righteousness, as that he judgeth them to be dung, even vile and contemptible, so that he doth disclaim all righteousness by them, that he may win Christ, that is, that he may be more and more nearly incorporated into him, and possessed of his righteousness by faith, and that he may be found, in that last and great day, not in Moses, but in Christ, that is, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, as his garment to stand before the Lord withal, but having that righteousness, to be clothed with which is indeed Christ's, and his through the faith of Christ, even that righteousness which God doth impute unto him through faith in Christ his name. This, I say, I take to be the sum of that which the apostle tells the Philippians in these words.

So that ye see here is, first, a disclaiming of his own righteousness by works, in that he judgeth them to be dung; 2, a reason why he so judgeth them, and so disclaims them, that he may win Christ, and may be found in him; thirdly, an explication what it is to be found in Christ, by a distinction of righteousness, into

his own, and Christ's, where he saith, 'not having mine own,' &c. Now let us see what observations may hence be gathered.

First, it is not unworthy our noting, that the apostle goeth over and over these points so often, as if he could never satisfy himself with disclaiming all righteousness by any works, and proclaiming Christ alone to be all his righteousness. In the former verse, he disclaimeth all his works done before his conversion, as no vantage, but loss unto him, and maketh Christ all his vantage, either for righteousness or salvation. In this verse, three several times he disclaimeth all his works generally, whether done before or after his conversion, as touching any righteousness by them; and again, so many times avoucheth in effect Christ Jesus alone to be all his righteousness. Whence I observe, both the difficulty and the necessity of enforcing these points. A difficult and hard matter it is, when we have done anything well, when we have walked faithfully in our calling, when we have relieved the oppressed, judged the fatherless, defended the widow, when we have humbled ourselves in prayer, chastened ourselves with fasting, abstained from the delights of the world, or pleasures of the flesh, &c.; a difficult and hard matter, I say, it is, herein not to please ourselves, not somewhat to be puffed up with these things, not to have some conceit of merit and righteousness by these things; a difficult matter to persuade us that these things are no vantage unto us, unto justification or salvation; a difficult matter to persuade us that these things are but loss and dung, things vile and contemptible. And yet, necessary it is that we be thus persuaded of these and the like things, as touching any confidence of our righteousness or salvation by them, and that we count Christ alone all our righteousness, and the horn of our salvation. And, therefore, the apostle knowing both the difficulty, and yet the necessity of persuading this, beateth upon it twice, thrice, often, that he did thus and thus, and therefore the Philippians should do so.

This should teach us, with great diligence, to observe and mark the things that are so much and so often beaten upon, as things which either we are dull to comprehend, or unwilling to yield unto, and yet things which are, as most certain for their truth, so most necessary for their use; for albeit all the things in the whole book of God be of such importance as that they are most worthy of our due meditation and diligent observation, as able to make us wise unto salvation, yet when things are so much urged, and so often beaten upon, we are to think that it is not without great cause that they are so pressed, and, therefore, that they are with greater attention and heedfulness to be marked by us. As, therefore, we are with all diligence to observe whatsoever is written, because all things are written for our learning, so let us, with all diligence, observe the things so often urged. It may be that they are so often urged because

of our dulness to comprehend them, it may be because of our unwillingness to yield unto them, it may be because of the unfeigned assent that we should yield unto the truth of them, it may be because of the necessary use that there is of them. Surely they are not so much urged without great and urgent cause. And so, for these points here beaten upon, let us assure ourselves both that it is most true that our works are no part of our righteousness, but Christ our whole righteousness, and that it necessarily behoveth us to be thoroughly persuaded thereof. How good soever, therefore, our works seem unto us, and how difficult soever it be to persuade us that our very best works are to be judged but loss and dung, yet seeing the apostle so often tells us that he judged so of his best works, let there be the same mind in us that was in him, and let us judge so too.

2. In that the apostle saith, ‘and do judge them to be dung,’ I note the apostle’s present judgment of his present works. He now, at this present, in the state wherein he now stands, doth judge all things, even his very best present works, to be so far from being any part of his righteousness, as that he judgeth them to be dung, even vile and contemptible, so full of pollution and uncleanness as that there is no reckoning to be made of them in respect of any righteousness by them, but rather they are to be contemned as uncleanness. Whence I observe, that our very best works, such as are wrought after our knowledge of Christ Jesus, and faith in his name, are no part of that righteousness whereby we are accounted righteous before God. Great difference, I know, there is between the works which go before and the works which follow after faith. For those are evil, these are good works; those proceed from an impure heart, these from an heart purified by faith; those cannot please God, these are pleasing and acceptable unto God; those are in justice rewarded with death, these are in mercy rewarded with life; those, even the very best of them, have the nature of sin, and are wholly unholy, these are in part holy, and may truly be called our inherent righteousness. But for any part in that righteousness whereby we are made righteous before God, even these works which are the fruits of faith, they have no part at all in it. They cannot hide or put away our sins, they cannot endure the severity of God’s judgment; here they must give place, here they are to be judged loss and dung. The reason, then, why our very best works are no part of our righteousness before God is, because that in every such view and examination of them they are to be judged loss, and even dung. So the apostle counted such works as he did even then when he wrote these things; and therefore much more are we to make the same account of whatsoever good works we do after that our hearts be purified by faith in Christ Jesus.

The exception which is taken against this doctrine from this place by some is this, they say the apostle doth not here speak of such works as he did after he

believed, but only of such works as he did before he believed, before his conversion unto Christ, and therefore that hence nothing can be gathered against justification by works done after faith in Christ Jesus. But how perversely they falsify the meaning of the apostle, yourselves may easily judge by that which already hath been spoken; for the apostle having spoken in the former verse of such works as he did before he believed, affirming of them that howsoever they seemed vantage unto him before his conversion unto Christ, yet afterwards he counted them no vantage, but loss, for Christ his sake, doth in this verse speak not only of them, but of all his works generally, whatsoever and whensover done, saying, ‘Yea, doubtless, I think all things but loss,’ &c. It cannot be denied but that he spake in the former verse of such works as he did before he believed. And when he addeth unto that this general term, ‘Yea, doubtless, I think all things but loss,’ doth he speak only of such works as he did before? Nay; having spoken before of works only done before faith, in this general term be includeth all works both done before and after faith, and judgeth them all to be but loss and dung. Again, as he said before that when once he came to the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he counted those things loss which before seemed vantage unto him; so now he saith in the present, that he doth think all things but loss, that he doth judge all things to be dung; which cannot otherwise be meant than of his present opinion and judgment touching such works as now presently he did. Neither can it be said that is his present judgment indeed, but of such works only as he did before he believed. For it is, as himself saith, his present judgment, as of such works, so of all works generally, the general term being therefore added to comprise not only those which he had spoken of before, but all others also. For reply unto which answer they cry out upon us for blasphemy, and ask question upon question, to make some show that they justly charge us with blasphemy. For whereas we say that good works done after faith are here meant by the apostle, and are judged by him to be but loss and dung, they ask whether we call the fruits of the Spirit dung? whether Paul gloried of dung when he said, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the just Judge shall give me in that day?’ What crown of righteousness is due unto dung? what just judge will vouchsafe to give a crown unto dung? what thanks [do] we owe unto God for creating us in Christ Jesus unto good works, if they be nothing else but dung? And for conclusion they say, that if the good works of the faithful be but loss and dung, then are not good works to be done or liked, but to be disliked and neglected. Thus they triumph in their jugglings, and make a show as if all they spake were gospel, and whosoever said otherwise

did nothing else but blaspheme. But will ye see how they deceive the world with a vain show of words wherein there is no substance? All this fair flourish which they make is quickly beaten down by that one distinction whereof I have often told you, and whereof they are not ignorant. In good works, therefore, we must understand that there are two things to be respected: the one, their substance; the other, their quality. The substance of the work I call the action itself, as judging the fatherless, relieving the oppressed, defending the widow, feeding the hungry, and the like; the quality of the work I call the confidence which men have to be made righteous before God, and to be saved by such works. Now, these works, I say, according to their substance, are good; as to judge the fatherless, to relieve the oppressed, to defend the widow, to feed the hungry, and the like, are good works, holy works, works commanded by God, and works rewarded by him. But in respect of any confidence to be justified before God by them or the like, or to be saved by them, they are to be judged but loss and dung; because, as it is written, ‘he that rejoiceth must rejoice in the Lord,’ which being so, the answer to their demands is as possible as they think it impossible, *i. e.* most easy.

1. Therefore where they ask whether we call the fruits of the Spirit dung, we answer No. But, we say, that those good works which, according to the substance of the action, are the fruits of the Spirit, are, in respect of any merit or confidence to be reposed in them, of righteousness or salvation by them, to be judged loss and dung. Secondly, where they ask whether Paul gloried of dung when he said, ‘I have fought a good fight,’ &c., we answer, No; he glorieth in his faithfulness and constancy in the work of his ministry, not as putting any confidence of his righteousness or salvation in them (for so they should be but dung), but because he knew that his labour should not be in vain in the Lord. Thirdly, where they ask what crown of righteousness is due unto dung, we answer, None; for the crown of righteousness is due unto our good works, not as they are from us, but as they are the work of God’s Spirit in us; neither so for any merit in them, but only for his promise’s sake, who both worketh in us, and crowneth his own works in us. Fourthly, where they ask what just judge will vouchsafe to give a crown unto dung, we answer, None will do it; but the most righteous Judge, the Lord of heaven and earth, because he is righteous and keepeth promise for ever, giveth a crown unto our good works, not as they are dung, not as they are poisoned, tempered with that quality of confidence in them, but as they are the work of his Spirit in us. Fifthly, where they ask what thanks we owe unto God for creating us unto good works, if they be nothing else but dung, we answer, That it is their shameful abusing of the world* to say that we judge them to be nothing else

* Qu. ‘word’?—Ep.

but dung. In respect of that quality, we say that they are to be judged loss and dung; but in respect of their substance, we say that they are good, and that we are to glorify God by walking in such good works as he hath ordained us to walk in. Lastly, where they say that if the good works of the faithful be but loss and dung, then are not good works to be done or liked, but to be disliked and neglected, we say the same. But who are they that say that the good works of the faithful are nothing else but loss and dung? Because we do not invest them into the glory of Christ Jesus, because we do not make them any part of our righteousness before God, because we stand not upon any merit of salvation by them, do we therefore say that they are nothing else but loss and dung? Thus indeed they bear the world in hand, and thus they lead captive many poor and ignorant souls into many grievous and noisome errors. But mark, men and brethren, what it is that we say: we say that good works, in respect of the substance of the action, are good works, a sweet-smelling odour, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing unto God, and such as God hath ordained us to walk in unto life and salvation; only in respect of any merit or confidence of righteousness or salvation, we say they are to be judged but loss and dung. See, then, and judge between us and them, whether we say simply that they are but loss and dung. These are they that with feigned words make merchandise of your souls, whose judgment long agone is not far off, and whose damnation sleepeth not. By this judge of the rest; and as they deserve in this, so let them be credited in the rest. By the circumstance of the place, ye see the necessary collection of the doctrine delivered, and how the gainsayers do falsify the meaning of the apostle.

Let this, then, serve to instruct us in the true use of good works. They are the way which God hath ordained that we should walk in, to the glory of his name, and to the salvation of our own souls; as both that exhortation of our Saviour proveth, Mat. v. 16, where it is said, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;’ and likewise that saying of the apostle, Eph. ii. 10, where he saith, ‘that we are the workmanship of God, created unto good works, which he hath ordained that we should walk in them.’ But they are no part of that righteousness whereby we are made righteous before God; for ‘Christ alone it is that is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption,’ 1 Cor. i. 30. It is the blood of Christ Jesus that cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John i. 7. Our very best works, and all our righteousness (as the prophet witnesseth, Isa. lxiv. 6) is but as filthy clouts; and touching them, when we have done all that we can, we must say as our Saviour willeth us, Luke xvii. 10, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.’ Let us therefore ‘walk before the Lord

in holiness and in righteousness all the days of our life. For without holiness of life no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. But let no man be puffed up with any conceit of his own righteousness by his holiness; for if he justify himself, his own mouth shall condemn him, Job ix. 20; and if he say that he is perfect, the Lord shall judge him wicked. Our good works are the fruits of our faith, and the effects of our justification by faith, declaring and testifying that we are justified before God. Let us therefore abound in every good work, that we may have the testimony of our faith and of our justification sealed up unto our souls. But let us not so please ourselves in all the good that we do, as that we count ourselves righteous thereby, for in many things we sin all, James iii. 2; and he that faileth in one point of the law, he is guilty of all, chap. ii. 10. If we will be righteous before God, we must lay away all pharisaical conceit of our own righteousness by works, and instead thereof we must take up the prayer of the poor publican, Luke xviii. 13, and cry, 'O God, be merciful unto me a sinner.' And of this let us assure ourselves, that the more holy and the better that any man is, the more readily he confesseth his sins unto the Lord, and acknowledgeth his unrighteousness in his sight. It is most damnable pride that makes us rush into part with Christ, and to part stakes with him. Let us therefore, with the apostle, make Christ all our righteousness, and account our own righteousness which is by works to be but loss and dung, and no vantage at all either unto justification or salvation.

Thirdly, In that the apostle saith that he judgeth them to be dung that he might win Christ, I note the reason why he judgeth all things to be dung, which is, that he might win Christ; as if he should say, that unless he judged all things to be dung, he could not win Christ, he could not be thoroughly ingrafted into Christ, to be partaker of his righteousness. Whence I observe that either we must disclaim all righteousness by any works of our own, or else we cannot be partakers of the righteousness of Christ Jesus; either we must judge our own works whatsoever to be loss and dung, or else we cannot win Christ. This also the apostle sheweth in another place, Rom. iv. 5, where he saith that unto him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for his righteousness; to him that worketh not, i. e. to him that dependeth not on his works, to him that standeth not upon the merits of his works, to him that maketh not his works his righteousness, to him his faith is counted for righteousness; 'but to him that worketh, the wages is not counted by favour, but by debt;' to him that worketh, that is, to him that dependeth on his works, that standeth upon the merit of his works, and thinks to be justified by them, his wages is not counted by favour, but by debt, and [he] is not justified by grace through faith. Who, then, are justified by faith? Even they that disclaim right-

eousness by works. And who are they that are not justified by grace through faith? Even they that stand upon their righteousness by their works. Wilt thou be partaker of Christ his righteousness by faith? Thou must disclaim all righteousness by thy works. Wilt thou stand upon thy righteousness by thy work? Thou canst not be partaker of the righteousness of Christ by faith. For there is no communion or fellowship betwixt them, but as the apostle saith of the election of the Jews, Rom. xi. 6, so I say of our justification by the righteousness of Christ Jesus, if we be partakers of Christ his righteousness; 'if we be justified by grace, then not of work, or else were grace no more grace; but if of works, it is no more grace, or else were work no more work.' We must therefore disclaim all righteousness by works, if we will lay any claim unto righteousness by Christ; we must judge all our works to be loss and dung, if we will win Christ.

Let this, then, teach us to beat down every thought and every imagination of our hearts that exalteth itself against God, and to bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ. Let us not think of the best works that we do above that is meet, neither let us bear ourselves upon them above that we ought. Let us be filled with the fruits of righteousness, but let us not think them any part of our righteousness before God. If we will be righteous before God, we must be clothed with Christ his righteousness. We cannot lay any claim unto Christ his righteousness, unless we will disclaim our own righteousness. Let us therefore humble ourselves before God, let us acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, and the best things that we do to be so full of pollutions and imperfections, that they cannot possibly abide the trial of God's judgment. And seeing we cannot win Christ, and be partakers of his righteousness, unless we judge all things without him to be but loss and dung, let us with the apostle judge them to be dung, that we may win Christ; let us disclaim all righteousness by them, that we may be clad with the righteousness of Christ. So shall our unrighteousness be hid, and our sins covered, and whatsoever imperfection is in us, it shall not be imputed unto us.

Fourthly, In that he addeth, 'and may be found in him,' I note that another branch of his reason why he judgeth all things, and so all his works, to be dung, is, that he might be found in Christ; that is, that when God shall come to judge both the quick and the dead, and inquiry shall be made what every man hath done in his body, he may be found in Christ, not in Moses, not in the flesh, not in anything but in Christ. Whence I observe that either we must renounce all confidence in our own righteousness, and judge even our very best works in that respect to be but loss and dung, or else we shall not be found in Christ in that last and great day. For that which our Saviour Christ spake in the days of his flesh unto his disciples then present with him, Mat. xvi. 24, hath now also

its use to this our purpose : ‘ If any man,’ saith he, ‘ will follow me, let him forsake himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’ ‘ Let him forsake himself,’ that is, let him forsake all that he hath, as Luke expoundeth it, chap. xiv. 33, all outward prerogatives touching the flesh. In which place he signifieth that he that would be his disciple must put off all carnal affections, and renounce all carnal confidence, and so rejoice in him alone as that no cross nor anything shall take his rejoicing from him. And even so, he that will be found in Christ in that day, he must so rejoice in Christ alone, as that he have confidence in nothing else, but judge them also to be loss and dung. Otherwise as well might he be Christ his disciple which did not forsake all, as he may be found in Christ in that day which doth not judge all his works to be loss and dung in respect of any righteousness by them.

Let this also be another motive unto us to disclaim all righteousness by our works; for as there is no righteousness by faith unto him that claimeth righteousness by his works, as before we heard, so is there no salvation in that day unto him that reposeth any confidence of his righteousness in his works. ‘ There is no condemnation,’ saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 1, ‘ to them that are in Christ Jesus ;’ which, as it is true in this life, that they that are ingrafted into him

by faith, are freed from the law of sin, and of death, and so of condemnation, so it is true that they that shall be found in Christ Jesus in that day shall be freed from the sentence of condemnation. That, therefore, we may be found in him, and so freed from condemnation in that day, let us, with the apostle, judge even our best works to be but loss and dung, and disclaim all righteousness by our works. And surely this hath so prevailed with many great maintainers of justification by works, that when death hath summoned their judgment and appearance, they have disclaimed all their own works, and all righteousness by them, and with heart and voice desired to be found in Christ in that day. I should now shew how we may be found in Christ in that day.

O Lord our God, open our eyes, we beseech thee, that we may daily more and more see and behold those infinite treasures of righteousness and salvation which are laid up for us in thy Son Christ Jesus ! As thou hast vouchsafed to make him unto us righteousness and salvation, so give us an heart to acknowledge him our whole righteousness, and the horn of our salvation, that, disclaiming all righteousness by works of our own, we may daily more and more grow up in thy Son, and in that last and great day may be found in him !

LECTURE LVI.

Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness, &c.—PHILIP. III. 9.

NOW the apostle goeth forward, and having made this one branch of his reason why he judged all his works generally to be dung, that he might be found in Christ in that day, now he explicateth that phrase and manner of speech, and shews what it is to be found in Christ in that day, which is, to be found ‘ not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ,’ &c. Why, then, doth the apostle judge all things to be dung ? He doth so that he may be found in Christ in that day. Yea, but what needed him so to judge for this ? Could he not be found in Christ in that day unless he should judge all things to be dung ? No, he could not ; for to be found in Christ is to be found not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, &c. If, therefore, he would be found in Christ, he must put off all confidence in his own righteousness, and judge it to be dung, and rejoice only in the righteousness of Christ Jesus. Thus ye see the reason and the meaning of the apostle’s speech in general.

Now to open these words yet a little more particularly, ye see the apostle here speaks of two sorts of righteousness, the one his own, the other Christ’s. His own righteousness he calleth that righteousness

which is of the law, that is, which ariseth from the observation of the commandments and ordinances of the law, even from the performance of those things which God in his holy law requireth. Christ’s righteousness he calleth that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, that is, that righteousness which, being properly inherent in Christ, is imputed unto him through faith in him, even the righteousness which is of God through faith, that is, that righteousness which God doth impute unto him because he believeth in him, and in him whom he hath sent, Christ Jesus. His own righteousness, which is commonly called man’s inherent righteousness, ye see he describeth by the law, that is, by the observation of those things which God requireth in his law, not only ceremonial or judicial, but moral also ; for so he said before, that he was unrebukeable before men touching the righteousness which is in the law, that is, which the whole law required. Christ’s righteousness, which is commonly called man’s imputed righteousness, ye see he describeth by faith, which is the instrument whereby we take hold of this righteousness by Christ, in whom alone this righteousness is inherent, and by God, who of his own mercy imputeth Christ his righteousness unto us through faith. This

righteousness, he saith, is through the faith of Christ, therefore not ours, but as by faith in Christ we take hold of it : through the faith of Christ, therefore not by the works of the law ; through the faith of Christ, therefore not inherent in us. Again, this righteousness, he saith, is of God through faith, therefore not of the law through works ; of God through faith, therefore the gift of God unto him that believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly ; of God through faith, therefore not inherent in us, but only imputed unto us. Again, he saith not of this that it is his, as he said of the other ; but of this he saith, that it is through the faith of Christ, even of God through faith, therefore it is another's righteousness, the righteousness of Christ by his perfect obedience unto the law, even unto death, which being only inherent in him, God in mercy imputeth unto us through faith in Christ Jesus, whereby we lay hold on that righteousness which he hath fulfilled in us, and for us. Now, then, when the apostle signifieth that he would be found in that day not having his own righteousness, but Christ's, his meaning is, not that he would be found in that day without all holiness or righteousness of his own, but he would be found not having his own righteousness, as to be judged by his own righteousness ; he would not be judged by his own righteousness, but he would be clothed with Christ's righteousness, to be judged by it. The sum, then, of all, in brief, is this. It is as if the apostle had thus said : I do now judge all things, even all my works whatsoever, to be dung, that I may win Christ by faith, to be partaker of his righteousness, and that I may be found in that last and great day, when inquiry shall be made into every man's works, not in Moses, but in Christ ; that is, that I may be found not having mine own righteousness, which is by the observation of the commandments and ordinances of the law, as to be judged of the Lord by that righteousness ; but that I may be found in that righteousness which is indeed only inherent in Christ, and which God doth impute unto me through faith in Christ Jesus, that my sins being covered by his righteousness, I may be judged by it. This I take to be the apostle's meaning in these words. Now, let us see what observations may hence be gathered for our use.

Not having, &c. ; where, first, I note the antithesis and opposition that is between the righteousness of works by the law, and the righteousness of Christ through faith ; which two the apostle doth so carefully and diligently sever the one from the other, as that thereby he plainly shews that there can be no confusion or mixture of the one with the other. The like opposition betwixt these two sorts of righteousness, and like separation of the one from the other, our apostle hath in his Epistle to the Romans, where, shewing the cause of the ruin of the Jews, he saith, chap. x. 3, that 'they being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own

righteousness, submitted not themselves unto the righteousness of God ;' and afterwards he describeth, out of Moses, the righteousness which is of the law, thus, that 'the man which doth these things, shall live thereby ;' and then he sheweth what the righteousness of faith is. So likewise in his Epistle to the Galatians, chap. ii. 16, 'Know,' saith the apostle, 'that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ ;' and again, chap. v. 4, 5, 'Whosoever are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace : for we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness through faith.' Many such like places more might be produced, where these two sorts of righteousness are so opposed the one unto the other, and so distinguished and severed the one from the other, as that thence it is most plain that there is no communion or fellowship of the one with the other.

Whence I observe, that if justification be by the righteousness of works, then is it not by the righteousness of faith ; and if it be by the righteousness of faith, then is it not by the righteousness of works. Thus, also, our apostle, upon the same ground, reasoneth in his Epistle to the Romans ; for, having in the third chapter plainly distinguished righteousness by the works of the law, and righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ, and opposed rejoicing in the one unto rejoicing in the other, Rom. iii. 20, 21, 27, in the next chapter he taketh up the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and proving that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works, he beginneth his disputation thus : 'If Abraham,' saith he, 'were justified by works, he hath wherein to rejoice, but not with God ;' he hath wherein to rejoice, to wit, with men, but not with God ; which is in effect as if he should have said, If Abraham were justified by works, then was he not justified by faith. Again, that place in the eleventh chapter to the Romans is plain to this purpose, where it is said, chap. xi. 6, 'If it be of grace, it is no more of works, or else were grace no more grace ; but if it be of works, it is no more grace, or else were work no more work.' For albeit the apostle's speech there be of the election of the Jews, and not of the matter of justification, yet the apostle's reason being drawn from the nature of grace and works, it holdeth as well in the one as in the other, even generally ; for, speak of election, speak of justification, speak of salvation, or the like, still it holdeth, 'If it be of grace, it is no more of works, or else were grace no more grace ; but if it be of works,' &c. For if it be of grace, whether it be righteousness, or salvation, or whatsoever it be, it is given freely ; but if it be of works, then is it given not by favour or freely, but by debt, the nature of grace and the nature of work enforcing either of them so much. The reason why if our righteousness be of works it is not of faith, and if it be of faith it is not of works, is because the one of

these excludes the other ; for, as the apostle saith, Gal. v. 4, ‘ Whosoever are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace ; ’ as if he should have said, Justification by the law excludes justification by grace. And again, the apostle saith, Rom. iii. 27, that our ‘ rejoicing is excluded by the law of faith ; ’ as if he should have said, We are justified by faith, and that excludes all our rejoicing in any righteousness by our works. So that ye see plainly that if our justification be by the righteousness of works, then is it not by the righteousness of faith ; and if it be by the righteousness of faith, then is it not by the righteousness of works.

This may serve to instruct and to arm us against their damnable error, that tell us that we are justified and accounted righteous before God, partly by faith in Christ Jesus, and partly by our good works done here in the body. For if they may be thus mixed, as they tell us, the one with the other, if our righteousness before God may be both by faith and by works, then why doth the apostle so oppose the one against the other ? Why doth he always so carefully sever the one from the other ? Why would he be found in that day not having his own righteousness, but only the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ ? Why may not righteousness be counted both by favour and by debt ? Why may not righteousness be before God both by grace and by works ? Why should our rejoicing be excluded by the law of faith ? For what else are all these things, but so many invincible arguments that we cannot be justified before God both by faith and by works. Shifts I know they have, whereby they deceive themselves and many other unstable souls, whom they lead into the same pernicious errors with themselves. But let us hearken what the Spirit saith, neither let us couple together the things which the Spirit hath sundered. If the Spirit have told us that the wages is not counted both by favour and by debt, that righteousness is not both by grace and by works, let it suffice us that the Spirit hath said so, and only let us seek whether it be by grace or by works that we are counted righteous before God.

Secondly, I note that the apostle would be found in that last and great day, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law ; that is, not having that righteousness which is his by the performance of those things which the law required, as his cloak to be covered withal when he shall stand in the judgment, and in the congregation of the righteous. For that the apostle expoundeth to be the righteousness of the law, which is by performance of the works of the law, according as it is said, Rom. x. 5, ‘ The man that doth these things shall live thereby.’ Whereupon it is also called ‘ the law of works,’ Rom. iii. 27, the law which commandeth those works, by the observation whereof a man is called righteous. The apostle would be found not having this righteousness

which is by the works of the law. What then ? Would he be found in that day without any good works, without all holiness of life, without all righteousness by the law ? Was it his desire to be found a sinner in that day ? Did he think it would be better for him if he should be found unrighteous, than if he should be found righteous in that day ? No such matter. Nay, when he was now ready to be offered up upon the sacrifice and service of their faith whom he had won unto the faith, when the time of his departing out of the body was at hand, he rejoiced that he had fought a good fight, that he had finished his course, that he had kept the faith. And when he laboured in the work of his ministry more abundantly than all the rest, he had respect unto his rejoicing in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. He knew that the sentence in that day would pass thus, ‘ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world : for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat,’ &c. ; and again, ‘ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,’ &c., Mat. xxv. 34-38, &c. He knew that his watchings, his fastings, his stripes, his imprisonments, his perils, his labours, his care of all the churches, should not be in vain in the Lord. He desired, therefore, no doubt, to be found in that day filled with the fruits of righteousness, and abounding in every good work ; he desired, no doubt, in that day to hear that voice, Mat. xxv. 21, ‘ It is well done, good servant and faithful ; thou hast been faithful in little, I will make thee ruler over much : enter into thy Master’s joy.’ How, then, would he be found not having his own righteousness, which is of the law ? 1. For righteousness by the ceremonial law he cared not at all for that, he judged that simply to be but loss, to be but dung. 2. For righteousness by the moral law, by the observation of the duties commanded in the first and second table touching the love of God, and of his neighbour, he judged that also to be dung, in respect of any merit, if he should be judged by it. He would therefore be found in that day not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, even of the law moral, as to be judged of the Lord by it, by the merit of it. He would have righteousness, and holiness, and good works in that day, that in the judgment he might receive reward according to them ; but he would not have them to be judged by them in that day, to offer them in that day unto Christ as a due desert of his Master’s joy, to receive his sentence for them in that day.

Having, then, before seen that we cannot be accounted righteous before God both by faith and by works, both by the righteousness of Christ and by our own righteousness, hence I observe that our own righteousness by works is no part of that righteousness whereby we are accounted righteous before God. For if it were, how should we desire with the apostle to be

found in the day of Christ not having our own righteousness,—an argument, indeed, impregnable, yet do those evil-workers* make a show of answers herenanto. They say the apostle, in this place and elsewhere, calleth that a man's own justice which he challengeth by the works of the law, or nature, without the grace of Christ, and therefore nothing can hence be concluded against that righteousness which is by works after grace. But what a shift this is, rather than an answer, was shewed the last day. For that by man's own righteousness, he meaneth that righteousness which man challengeth by such works as he spake of immediately before, themselves will grant; and that he spake before, as of works done before faith, and without the grace of Christ, verse 7, so of all works generally whatsoever, verse 8, I showed, both by the general term there used, which must needs comprehend more than he had spoken of before, and likewise by that he saith, that he doth now at this present judge all things to be dung, which cannot otherwise be meant, than of his present judgment, touching such works as now presently he did. Again, why should not the apostle, by man's own righteousness, mean that whole righteousness which is in man by works, whensover done, whether before or after faith, whether without or with the grace of Christ? Doth that righteousness which is in us by works done after faith by grace any way present us righteous before God, so that we should desire to be found having it, to be judged by it? Shall any thing that is unclean enter into his presence? or can any man bring a clean thing out of filthiness? Is there any man that, being assisted, and prevented, and followed with the grace of God's Spirit, doth good, and sinneth not? Is it not so with the best man that lives under the cope of heaven, that if the Lord would dispute with him he could not answer him one thing of a thousand? Is man's best righteousness better than Isaiah confesseth of his and the rest of the church's; is it not as filthy clouts? Surely all his works whatsoever, done in the body of his flesh, are so polluted with the contagion of the flesh, as that they are not able to endure the severity of God's judgment, but that he had need, with the prophet David, Ps. cxliii. 2, to lift up his voice, and to pray, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Is, then, even that righteousness which is in us by works done by grace after faith, so full of imperfections, so full of uncleanness, by reason of the contagion of our flesh, as that we should desire not to be judged by it? Why, then, should not the apostle, by man's own righteousness in this place, mean that righteousness which is in us by works done by grace after faith? The circumstance of the place proving it, and nothing being able to be brought against it, it is to be concluded that by man's own righteousness is here meant

* Rhemenses in hunc locum.

even that righteousness which is by works after grace. See, then, that we should desire with the apostle to be found in the day of Christ not having our own righteousness; and seeing all our own righteousness, by any works whatsoever, is so full of imperfection and uncleanness, by reason of the contagion of our flesh, as that we should desire not to be judged by it, hence I take it, it is clear that our own righteousness is no part of that righteousness whereby we are accounted righteous before God.

This may teach us how to desire to be found in that day, having, or not having, our own righteousness, which is by our works. We are to desire to be found in that day filled with the fruits of righteousness, and abounding in every good work, full of holiness towards God and righteousness towards men, because then we shall 'receive the things which are done in our body, according to that we have done, whether it be good or evil.' The wicked, and they that forget God, and would not walk in his ways, howsoever they 'cry unto the mountains, Fall on us, and unto the rocks, Cover us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,' yet shall the hand of the Lord find them out, and as he shall find them he shall judge them; he shall recompense them according to the wickedness of their ways, and they shall be turned into hell. But if then we shall be found to have hated iniquity, to have followed after peace, holiness, and righteousness, to have had our conversation honest, &c., the most righteous Judge, both of heaven and earth, he will pass by our sins and iniquities, and in his great mercy towards us, he will reward us according to the good that we have done, not respecting the merit of our works, but because he is merciful, and keepeth promise for ever, not suffering our labour to be in vain in the Lord. We are therefore to desire to be found in that day, not without holiness of life, or good works, but having such righteousness of our own that, in the judgment, the Lord in mercy may reward us according to it, and not according to our sins. But we are to desire to be found in that day not having our own righteousness, to be judged by it, or to receive reward for it, or according to the merit and worth of it. For albeit it shall be rewarded, yet shall not the reward be given for it; and albeit the reward shall be given according to it, yet not for the merit of the work, but only for his promise and mercy's sake, who accepteth that graciously which is his, and pardoneth that graciously which is amiss. For all that ever we do, or all that ever we suffer, is not worthy of that glory which shall be shewed unto us. But with the prophet David, we must turn our voice unto the Lord, and say, even of our best righteousness, 'If thou, O Lord, straitly mark what is amiss, even in the best thing that we do, O Lord, who shall stand?'

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle would be found in that last and great day having that

righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, &c. He would be clothed in that day with Christ his righteousness, imputed unto him by God through faith, that he might be judged by it, and receive his reward according to the merit of it. This righteousness is sometimes called the righteousness of faith, because by faith in Christ we are made partakers of this righteousness; sometimes the righteousness of God, because it is the mere gift of God, who doth impute it unto us through faith in Christ; sometimes the righteousness of Christ, because it is his, and only inherent in him. He would be found in that day having this righteousness. Hence, then, I observe, that the righteousness whereby we are accounted righteous before God is the righteousness of Christ, or of faith, or of God, whichever ye will make it. This, also, the apostle hath everywhere, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'We are justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood.' Again, Gal. ii. 16, 'Know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.' Again, chap. iii. 11, 'That no man is justified,' saith the apostle, 'by the law, it is evident, for the just shall live by faith.' And again, Eph. ii. 8, 9, 'By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast himself.' Yea, everywhere almost, the Holy Ghost witnesseth that we are accounted righteous before God, not for our own works or deserts, but only by grace through faith, for the merit and obedience of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. This, then, is our righteousness before God, that God, through faith in Christ Jesus, imputeth not our sins unto us, but imputeth Christ his righteousness unto us, reckoning the righteousness of his obedience unto the law unto us, as if we had fulfilled the righteousness of the law in our flesh; and for the merits of his sufferings, wiping all our sins out of his sight and remembrance. So that Christ his righteousness alone is our righteousness before God, which, because God doth impute unto us freely by his grace through faith, therefore the apostle saith, 'It is God that justifieth.' God, then, justifieth; his grace only moveth him, not any of our works; Christ and his righteousness is the righteousness whereby we are justified, faith is the instrument whereby only we are made partakers of his righteousness.

I know that there are dogs which bark against this truth, affirming that the righteousness whereby we are justified is not only imputed unto us, but inherent in us. But this one place may serve to despise this their madness. It is of God, imputed by him unto us, therefore not inherent in us. It is through faith, therefore not inherent in us. It is through the faith of Christ, therefore really inherent only in Christ. It is not our own, but only by faith in Christ, therefore not really inherent in us. If they urge the apostle

James his authority to prove that the righteousness whereby we are justified is inherent in us, because he saith that 'a man is justified by works,' we answer that the apostle there speaketh not of that righteousness whereby man is made righteous before God, but only sheweth that by a man's works he is known and declared to be justified by faith, so that the apostle maketh not works in that place the causes, but only the fruits and effects of justification. If they reply that it is a sufficient proof that we are justified by works because we are justified by faith, which is a work, we answer that justification is attributed to faith because of Christ and his righteousness, which it receiveth, not because it is a work of ours. For as it is a work of ours, so it is not without some doubting, but is imperfect, as also our knowledge and love are, and so justification is not attributed unto it, but only as it taketh hold upon Christ Jesus, and his righteousness, which is our perfect righteousness. Whatsoever, therefore, they say, let us know that the righteousness whereby we are accounted righteous before God is only inherent in Christ Jesus, and is not ours but only by imputation, inasmuch as God doth impute it unto us through faith in Christ Jesus.

Let this teach us to beware of such deceivers as tell us that we are not justified before God by Christ his righteousness alone, but by works also. And seeing it is Christ his righteousness alone whereby we are made righteous before God, let us rejoice in Christ Jesus alone, and let us judge all our best works whatsoever to be dung, that we may be found in that day not having our own righteousness, &c. Why should it be thought injurious unto man to give all the glory of our righteousness or salvation unto Christ Jesus? Why should it not rather be thought injurious unto Christ Jesus to give any part of our righteousness or salvation unto man's works or merits? Too much cannot be taken from man, neither can too much be given unto Christ, for he is all in all unto us, our wisdom and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption; he is the reconciliation for our sins; by him, and through him, and for him, we have all that we have, and under heaven there is no name given whereby we may be saved, but only by the name of Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, give unto him that which is due unto him, and let not man rob him of his honour. Let us follow after peace, and holiness, and righteousness, and every good work, and let us know that this labour shall not be in vain unto us in the Lord. But let us know that it is God alone that justifieth us by grace through faith, not imputing our sins, but Christ his righteousness unto us, and so making his righteousness ours, as our sins were made his, to wit, by imputation only.

To knit up the last observation in a word, will you know how to be found in Christ in that day? A matter worthy your knowledge, for there shall be no condemnation unto them that then shall be found in him, Rom.

viii. 1. If then we will be found in Christ in that day, we must be found righteous to be judged by it. And thus far the matter goeth hard with us all, being all of us full of unrighteousness and ungodliness. What is then the righteousness wherein we must be found to be judged by it in that day? Not our own, for that would sink us deep, but the righteousness of Christ Jesus. How shall we be found in this righteousness in that day? If we renounce all confidence in our own righteousness as loss and dung, and trust perfectly on the grace of God that is brought unto us by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Let this, then, be our comfort, that we shall not be judged in that day by our own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ Jesus, whose whole obedience in suffering death and fulfilling of the law shall be the covering of our sins

and the cloak of our righteousness. And let it teach us to judge all our works, in respect of that righteousness whereby we are made righteous before God, to be but loss and dung, that we may be found in Christ, not having our own, &c.

O Lord our God, as thou hast vouchsafed to instruct us in our true righteousness, so vouchsafe, by a true and lively faith in thy Son Christ Jesus, to make us partakers of that righteousness! Judge not, O Lord, in that day by our own righteousness, which is full of unrighteousness and uncleanness; but passing by our sins and our iniquities, accept the righteousness of thy Son Christ Jesus for our unrighteousness, that we, being clothed with his righteousness, may be of the number of those unto whom it shall be said, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' &c.

LECTURE LVII.

That I may know him, and the virtue of his resurrection, &c.—PHILIP. III. 10.

NOW the apostle goeth forward, and sheweth other reasons why he renounced all his own merits as loss and dung, and rejoiced only in Christ Jesus, 1, as we have heard he did so, that he might gain the righteousness of Christ by faith; that was the first and principal gain that he reckoned upon by doing so. He did so for other advantages that he reckoned upon by doing so: as, 2, he did so that he might know Christ; 3, that he might know the virtue of his resurrection; 4, that he might know the fellowship of his afflictions, and be made conformable unto his death; 5, that he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. What is the reason, then, why the apostle, having cause of confidence and rejoicing in the flesh, and in things without Christ, doth renounce all things without Christ, and rejoice only in Christ Jesus? The reason is, because rejoicing in the flesh, and in the things without Christ, is unprofitable and hurtful; and contrariwise, the renouncing of all things without Christ, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, is most profitable. Why, what profit comes thereby? 1, Christ's righteousness, which is by faith; 2, the knowledge of Christ; 3, the knowledge of the virtue of his resurrection; 4, the knowledge of the fellowship of his afflictions, &c.; 5, the attaining unto the resurrection of the dead. All these vantages the apostle reckoned upon to follow his renouncing of all things without Christ, and his rejoicing only in Christ Jesus; for so he saith, that he judgeth all things loss and dung that he may win Christ, and may be found in him, &c., as if these things could not be unless he should do so. All which vantages do so follow the renouncing of all confidence in the flesh, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, as that these four last do issue and spring out of the first; for being justified by faith in Christ Jesus, we know Christ, we know the

virtue of his resurrection, &c., these being fruits issuing and growing out of that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ. Thus much for the general drift and meaning of these words.

Now for the more particular opening of these words, we must know, that by the knowledge of Christ is here meant not such a knowledge as whereby we are able to talk of Christ, of his birth, of his life, of his doctrine, of his death and passion, &c., but such a knowledge as whereby we feel and prove in ourselves, and in our own souls, that he is indeed our redemption, our reconciliation, our salvation, and whatsoever else we have heard, or read, or believed of him in the Scriptures; not a contemplative and knowing knowledge of Christ, but a lively and experimental knowledge of Christ in our own souls. Again, by the virtue of Christ his resurrection the apostle meaneth that regeneration, i. e. that dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness, which is wrought in us by the power of his resurrection. 3. By the fellowship of Christ his afflictions, the apostle meaneth that partaking which God's saints have with Christ, and of his afflictions, for the glory of Christ, and the good of the church, and their own conformity unto the death of Christ. Lastly, by attaining unto the resurrection of the dead, the apostle meaneth that eternal weight of glory in the heavens, which only they obtain that in this life know Christ by experience in their own souls, and by the power of his death and resurrection die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, and constantly endure such afflictions as the saints of God are partakers of, that so they may be conformable unto the death of Christ, who was consecrated through afflictions. The sum of all is this: the apostle tells the Philippians, that he hath no confidence in his merits or works, but only rejoiceth in Christ Jesus,

that so he may be justified before God by Christ his righteousness ; and that being justified by his righteousness through faith in his name, he may know Christ by a lively feeling of him in his own soul, and may by the power of his resurrection die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, and may constantly, with God's saints, suffer such afflictions as Christ hath suffered, and may be made conformable unto Christ his death, and at length may be received unto that glory which is prepared to be shewed in the resurrection of the just. Thus, then, ye see that both these are the fruits of the righteousness of faith, and that both the righteousness of faith, and these fruits issuing out of it, are all vantages which the apostle counteth he hath by renoueing all confidence in the flesh, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus. Now let us see what observations we may gather hence for our use.

That I may know him. This is one end wherefore the apostle would be found in Christ, having his righteousness through faith, and consequently wherefore he renounced all his own merits and works, and only rejoiced in Christ Jesus, even that he might know Christ ; for why judged he his own righteousness to be but loss and dung ? That he might 'win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ through faith.' And why would he be found in Christ his righteousness through faith ? That he 'might know Christ.' This is the fruit of the righteousness of faith, and both of them are vantages which follow the renouncing of all confidence in the flesh, and the rejoicing in Christ Jesus. But what ? Did not Paul know Christ ? Had he preached Christ so many years, and yet knew not Christ ? Had he planted so many churches in the faith of Christ, and yet knew he not Christ ? For answer hereunto (to omit that knowledge which is by vision in heaven, when we shall see him face to face), we must understand that there are two sorts of knowledge of Christ here on earth : the one a contemplative and knowing knowledge, *i.e.* such a knowledge as whereby we know that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, that he was sent into the world to save sinners, that he was crucified, that he died, that he was buried, that he was declared mightily to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, that he was highly exalted, and had a name given him above every name, &c., and whatsoever else the Scriptures of God do story of him. Such a knowledge of Christ was that which the Samaritans had by the saying of the woman, which testified of him, saying, John iv. 39, 'He hath told me all that ever I did ;' and such a knowledge the physician hath of his physic, and the virtue thereof, by relation of others, and by reading in his books. The other knowledge of Christ is an experimental and feeling knowledge of Christ, whereby we feel and know in our own souls that he is such a one as the Scriptures describe him to be ; that he is 'made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctifi-

cation and redemption ;' that he 'died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.' Such a knowledge of Christ was that which the Samaritans had, ver. 42, when they had heard Christ themselves, and so knew that this was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world ; and such a knowledge of Solomon's wisdom and prosperity the queen of Sheba had, when she had seen it with her eyes, and heard it with her ears ; and such a knowledge the physician hath of his physic, and of the virtue thereof, when he hath had experience of it in himself. Now when the question is here asked, whether Paul did not know Christ, because he saith, 'that I may know Christ,' we must understand that the apostle doth not here speak of the former sort of the knowledge of Christ ; for it is out of all question that he that had preached Christ among the Gentiles so many years, that had planted so many churches in the faith of Christ, knew whatsoever the Scriptures of God did witness of Christ. But the apostle here speaketh of that experimental and feeling knowledge of Christ, whereby we feel and know in our own souls that such as the Scriptures describe him to be, such he is unto us. What then ? Had not the apostle this experimental feeling and knowledge of Christ ? It is not to be doubted but that this holy and elect vessel of God had this same feeling knowledge of Christ Jesus. How, then, would he be found having the righteousness of Christ, which is through faith, that he might know Christ ? It is not simply meant that he would be so found that he might have that feeling knowledge of Christ, but that he might grow up daily more and more with all godly increasing in that feeling knowledge of Christ. He would be found righteous, with the righteousness which is of God through faith, that he may daily grow up with all godly increasing in this feeling knowledge of Christ.

Whence, first, I observe what knowledge of Christ it is which all Christians should principally long and thirst after ; and that is, that they may know Christ with such a feeling knowledge, as that they feel and know by experience in their own souls the infinite treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and salvation that are hid in him for them ; for this is the saving knowledge of Christ, to know him not only to be a Saviour, but to be *our* Saviour. Many there are that know Christ to be the Son of God, to be the Saviour of the world, to have paid the price of man's sins by his one oblation of himself, and to be he that is appointed judge both of the quick and dead in that day. Many there are that can and do speak of his praises in the great congregation, that preach unto others the infinite treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and salvation that are hid in him, that talk of his salvation from day to day, that speak as if they had all knowledge and understanding, and knew Christ as well as the best. Many, I say, such there are, and I wish that the number of them were far greater than it is. But yet here is not all that knowledge of Christ that

we should long and thirst after; for thus far many come, whose knowledge is nothing else but the increasing of their judgment and condemnation; as the apostle plainly witnesseth where he saith, Heb. vi. 4-6, that 'it is impossible for them which were once lightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift,' &c.; and likewise the apostle Peter, where he saith, that if they that have once escaped from the filthiness of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and of the Saviour Jesus Christ be yet again tangled therein, and overcome, their latter end is worse than the beginning. By both which places it is plain that men may have a good measure of the knowledge of Christ, whose end, notwithstanding, is death and damnation. We must therefore long and thirst after a farther knowledge of Christ. This is the saving knowledge of Christ Jesus, that we know that we are the sons of God; that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; that he is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that he is the reconciliation for our sins; that he sitteth at the right hand of God to make request for us; that 'an inheritance, immortal and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for us.' To have such a feeling knowledge of him, as that, by our own experience in our souls, we find in ourselves the fruits of his sufferings, the comforts of his promises, the riches of his mercies, knowing, by the testimony of the Spirit witnessing unto our spirit, that what righteousness he hath fulfilled for his children he hath fulfilled for us, what benefits of salvation he hath purchased for his children he hath purchased for us, what promises he hath made unto his children belong unto us, what joys he hath prepared for his children are reserved for us, this is that knowledge which passeth all knowledge, this is that knowledge which is that saving knowledge, and this is that knowledge which we must long and thirst after. By this knowledge it is that John saith, 1 John iii. 14, 'We know that we are translated from death unto life, because we love the brethren'; and again, chap. v. 15, 'We know that he beareth us in whatsoever we ask, and we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him'; and again, ver. 19, 20, 'We know that we are of God, we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us a mind to know him which is true.' How knew the apostle these things? He felt the comforts of these things in his own soul; his own heart did leap within him, rejoicing at these things.

O my brethren, try and examine your hearts, how many of you have this knowledge of Christ; and withal see and consider with yourselves what a longing and thirsting desire you should have after this knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of Christ Jesus even by hearing, and by reading, and by faith, is (as not long since we heard) the most excellent knowledge that is; but this experimental knowledge of Christ, to know by experience in our own souls that he is such

as by the word we believe him to be, this is the most sweet and most comfortable knowledge, even so sweet and so comfortable as passeth all understanding. If ye have this knowledge of Christ, ye are already entered in part into those joys which are reserved in heaven for you. If ye have it not, oh thirst after it, and give your souls no rest till ye come unto this knowledge of Christ. Give all diligence unto the reading and hearing of the word of life, and pray always, with all manner of prayer and supplication in the spirit, that ye may know Christ with a feeling knowledge, and with a sweet experience in your own souls that whatsoever ye have heard and believed of him is most true.

The second thing which here I note is, from what root this experimental and feeling knowledge of Christ issmeth and springeth; and that is, from the righteousness of faith; for so we are to understand this knowledge of Christ to be a vantage following the renouncing of our own righteousness, and rejoicing in the righteousness of Christ by faith, as that this vantage springeth from the righteousness of faith. Hence, then, I observe that only they know Christ by this experimental knowledge, who, being justified by faith, do, by a true and lively faith, apply the righteousness and obedience of Christ Jesus unto themselves; for then do we begin to have this feeling knowledge of Christ in our own souls, when by faith we lay hold on the righteousness of Christ Jesus, to be justified thereby; and the more sure hold that we lay by the hand of faith on the righteousness of Christ Jesus, the more we grow up in this feeling knowledge of Christ Jesus. 'We believe,' saith Peter unto Christ, John vi. 69, 'and know that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' We *believe*, saith he, and *know*; as if he should have said, We believe, and in our own souls, by the testimony of the Spirit witnessing it to our spirit, we know that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Faith, then, in Christ Jesus is the root whence this feeling knowledge of Christ cometh; and the more stedfastly we believe, the greater feeling of this knowledge doth the Spirit of God work within our souls. Many of us, I fear me, want this feeling knowledge of Christ; many of us that say and think that we know him, know him not by experience in our own souls; many of us that have heard and read of him, know not that he is made of God unto us wisdom, or righteousness, sanctification, or redemption; many of us know not what treasures of wisdom, or knowledge, or salvation are laid up in him for us; many of us, I fear me, feel not in ourselves the sweetness of Christ, the fruits of his sufferings, the comforts of his promises, the riches of his mercies; many of us, I fear me, only know Christ as we hear of Christ and read of Christ, but know him not by his comfortable presence in our own souls. And what is the cause of all this? Surely we have no root in ourselves; we want that true and lively faith whence

such knowledge should spring. We deceive ourselves, flattering ourselves, and saying we believe in Christ, we know Christ, wheras we neither believe in him nor know him. A smattering faith and a smattering knowledge of Christ we have; but a justifying faith, or saving knowledge, we have none.

Is, then, a justifying faith the root whence a feeling and saving knowledge doth spring? Let this, then, teach us to use with all religious reverence those means which the Lord hath ordained for the begetting and increasing of faith in us, that we may believe, and know, and growing in faith, we may grow also in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Let us with reverence hearken unto the word preached, and celebrate the holy sacraments, two ordinary means which the Lord useth thereby to beget and to increase faith in us. For faith comes by hearing, as the apostle witnesseth where he saith, Rom. x. 17, 'Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' Seeing, therefore, we cannot know Christ unless we believe in him, and seeing we cannot believe in him unless we hear his word preached, that we may believe in him, and know him, let us willingly flock, as doves unto the windows, unto the house of the Lord to hear the word preached. Again, as by the word preached, so likewise by the use of the sacraments, the Lord as by means strengtheneth and increaseth our faith in us. In the Lord's supper, the bread is broken for us, given to us; we take it, and eat it, and digest it, and it is made one substance with us: the wine likewise is poured out for us, given unto us; we take it, and drink it, and it is made one with us. All which rites and actions, what else are they but so many pledges and seals for the strengthening and increasing of our faith in the benefits of our salvation, purchased by the death and passion of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus? The bread that is broken for us in that supper, and the wine that is poured out for us, they are so sure pledges unto us that Christ his body was broken for us, and his blood shed for us, as that we ought as stedfastly to believe the one by faith, as we clearly see the other with our eyes. So likewise the bread and the wine that are given unto us by the minister in the supper, they are so sure pledges unto us that Christ by his Spirit giveth us his body and his blood even then in the supper, as that we ought as stedfastly to believe the one by faith, as we clearly see the other with our eyes. So likewise the bread which with the hand of our body we take and eat, and the wine which with the hand of our body we take and drink, are so sure pledges unto us that by faith our souls do feed upon the body and blood of Christ, as that we ought as stedfastly to believe the one by faith, as we clearly see the other with our eyes. Lastly, the bread and wine, which, being digested, are turned into our substance, and made one with us, and we with them, are so sure seals unto us that by a mystical union and spiritual conjunction we are made one with Christ, and

Christ with us, members of his body, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones, as that we ought as stedfastly to believe this by faith as we perfectly know that by sense.

Such are the helps which we have by this holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, for the strengthening and increasing of our faith. Many things ye see here are fully to assure our faith, that we should not doubt, but as surely as we receive the bread and wine into our hodies to become wholly ours, so withal our soul receiveth Christ, together with his passion and righteousness, to be wholly ours, as surely as if he had wrought them in our own persons. Yea, such assurance our faith groweth unto by the use of this holy supper, as that now we know, by the powerful operation of God's Holy Spirit within us, that God is in us indeed, and that now Christ is ours, and we Christ's, and that together with Christ we have all things, even all the benefits of our salvation. And the more that our faith is strengthened hereby, the more also is this feeling knowledge of Christ increased in us, so that together with the growth of our faith there is a growth of this knowledge. Seeing therefore this knowledge of Christ groweth as our faith in Christ groweth, and seeing our faith is so strengthened and increased by the holy use of this holy supper, let us, so often as we are called unto this holy table, prepare ourselves with all holy reverence and fear to the celebration of these holy mysteries. Great is the benefit that here we do receive, if we eat of this bread, and drink of this cup worthily; for then we eat spiritually the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us, and these things are so sensibly represented unto our eyes and taste, as that our faith is fully assured thereof; so that henceforth we know by the working of the Spirit that Christ is ours, together with whatsoever is his. But if we present ourselves at these holy mysteries without due preparation and examination of ourselves, we have no such benefit, but rather we are guilty of the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour. Prove therefore yourselves whether you are in the faith, whether ye feel your hearts assured by the Spirit of God that the punishment of your sins is fully discharged in Christ, and that whatsoever Christ hath done pertaineth not only to others, but even to you also. If you believe these things, and know these things, though it be not without some doubts, and without some imperfections, behold, by the use of this supper your weak faith and imperfect knowledge shall be strengthened and increased. But if as yet ye have no such faith in Christ, no such knowledge of Christ, then may ye not presume to present yourselves at this holy table. The use of this supper is for the confirmation and strengthening of our faith, it is not for the begetting of faith in us; but that, being begotten by the word, is by the word and the use of the saerament thus confirmed.

The last thing which hence I observe is, that if we will

have this experimental knowledge of Christ in our own souls by faith in Christ Jesus, then must we renounce all confidence in our own merits and in our own righteousness whatsoever. For wherefore is it that men trust in their own merits, and in their own righteousness? Wherefore is it that men make reckoning to be justified and saved by the worth of their own works? Wherefore is it that men grow to a pharisaical pride and conceit of themselves, as if they had somewhat in themselves that might abide the trial? Surely it is because of the want of this feeling knowledge of Christ. They never felt in their own souls the sweetness of Christ, the comforts of Christ, the treasures of Christ. They know not by experience in their own souls that Christ is all in all unto them; they know not what Christ is made of God unto his children. They have a knowledge of Christ, but the knowledge of Christ hath not seized upon their souls, and therefore they do not know the full sweetness of Christ, and the full worth of Christ. For if they knew in their own souls that Christ were made of God unto them wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, they would only rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. But therefore they rejoice in the flesh, and have confidence in their own works, and in their own righteousness, because they know not Christ. If therefore we will know Christ with a saving knowledge, and a feeling knowledge of him in ourselves, we must utterly renounce all confidence in our own merits, and all trust in our own righteousness whatsoever.

What shall we say, then, unto them that stand upon the merit and worth of their own works, and of their own righteousness? Surely even thereby they show that howsoever they say they know Christ, yet they have not this experimental knowledge of him in their own souls; for if they had, they would know such infinite treasures of all spiritual graces to be hid in him, as that they would mind nothing without him. To conclude this point, therefore, let these trust in their merits, let those follow their vain delights and pleasures, let these seek after riches, let those spend their whole time in the study of human knowledge; but let us study to know Christ. If we have this feeling knowledge of him in our own souls, then come poverty, come sickness, come famine, come sword, come persecution, come affliction, come adversity, come what cross can come, our soul, notwithstanding all these, is at quiet rest; and in him we have comfort enough against all these. In him, because we know him, we know that treasures now, and comforts now are hid for us, whatsoever trouble or adversity we find in the world. Let us therefore study to know him, and, because faith is the root of this knowledge, let us use with all religious reverence those means whereby faith is either wrought or confirmed. And because confidence in our own merits and righteousness is an enemy to this knowledge, let us renounce all such confidence, and rejoice only in Christ Jesns, that we may know him, &c.

LECTURE LVIII.

And the virtue of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his afflictions, &c.—PHILIP. III. 10.

THAT I may know him, and the virtue. That is, and that I may know the virtue of his resurrection, i.e. that I may daily more and more feel in myself the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, i.e. that I may daily more and more die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, by the power of the Spirit which raised up Christ Jesus from the dead. For by resurrection in this place I understand both Christ his death and resurrection; and by the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, I understand not that power whereby Christ overcame death, and rose again from the dead, but that regeneration, that dying unto sin and living unto righteousness, which the Holy Ghost worketh in us by the power of Christ his death and resurrection. The third vantage, then, which the apostle reckons upon by disclaiming all righteousness by his own works, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, is, that hereby he shall know the virtue of Christ his resurrection in himself, whereby he shall daily more and more die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, which virtue of his resurrection he greatly desired to know, and which otherwise he could not know. So

that it is as if the apostle had thus said, I do judge all my own works whatsoever to be but dung, and quite renounce all confidence in my own righteousness, to the end that, being justified by the righteousness of Christ through faith in him, I may know, and daily more and more feel in myself, by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, whereby I may die unto sin, and live unto God in righteousness and true holiness. Thus much for the sense. Now for the observations.

And that I may know the virtue. Here, first, I note the apostle's great desire to know and to feel in himself, by the work of the Holy Ghost, the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection. He reckoned this knowledge amongst the chief vantages which he had in Christ Jesus, and for this vantage's sake he made no reckoning at all of his own righteousness by any works that he had wrought. Such a longing and thirsting desire he had to know the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection. He knew Christ his death and resurrection, that he died, and was buried, and that he rose again the third day; but he desired to know the

virtue of his death and resurrection. He knew likewise this virtue of Christ his death, that thereby he had vanquished sin, death, and the devil; and this virtue of his resurrection, that thereby he had purchased for him righteousness, life, and everlasting salvation; but he desired to know and to feel in himself the death of sin by the virtue of his death, and the life of righteousness and holiness by the virtue of his resurrection. This virtue also of Christ his death and resurrection he knew, in that he felt in himself, by the power of the Spirit, a dying unto sin, and a living unto righteousness; but he desired to feel this virtue of his death and resurrection in himself daily more and more, that he might daily more and more die in the old man, and be quickened [in the new man; that in every combat between the flesh and the spirit, the flesh might daily more and more be subdued to the spirit.

Whence I observe, what a vehement and earnest desire there should be in us all to know and to feel in ourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, and in whom there is some feeling thereof, to know and to feel it in themselves daily more and more. We all of us know that Christ died for our sins, and that he rose again for the full accomplishment of our justification; we know that by the power of his death we are delivered from the first and from the second death, from the death of sin in this life, and from the death of damnation for sin after this life, and that by the power of his resurrection we have our part both in the first and in the second resurrection: in the first resurrection, from sin unto righteousness; and in the second resurrection, from the power of the grave unto life everlasting; we know that we are buried with Christ by baptism into his death, that like as he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life; we know that if we be grafted with Christ to the similitude of his death, dying unto sin by the power of his death, even so we shall be to the similitude of his resurrection, living unto God [by the power of his resurrection. These things, I say, we know, at least we should know, and I wish that they were far better known than they are. But there is a further knowledge of the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, which in our souls we must long and thirst after. This is the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection that we must long and thirst after, to know and to feel in ourselves the death of sin, and the life of God; to know and to feel in ourselves that the strength of sin is abated in our flesh, and that the life of God is renewed in the spirit of our mind; to know and to feel in ourselves a loathing of sin, and a love of righteousness; to know and to feel in ourselves a mortification of the flesh with the affections and the lusts, and a quickening in our spirit by the fruits of the Spirit; to know and to feel in ourselves that delight which sometimes we took in unrighteousness, in uncleanness, in covetousness, in pride, in cruelty, in contention, or

the like sins, to be cooled, and a desire to live righteously, and soberly, and godly in this present world, to be kindled in us. For hereby we know in ourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, if we feel in ourselves this mortification of the old man, and this quickening in our inner man; when his death works the death of sin in us, when his resurrection works the life of God in us, then we know in ourselves the virtue of his death and resurrection. The sacrament hereof is the sacrament of baptism; for when we are baptized, we are baptized into the similitude of his death, that like as he died once for sin, so we should ever die unto sin; and into the similitude of his resurrection, that like as he rose from the dead, so we which were dead in sin should not henceforth serve sin, but live unto God in righteousness and true holiness. Even our baptism doth witness unto us, that so many of us as are baptized unto Christ Jesus, we should die unto sin, and live unto God in righteousness and true holiness; which death unto sin, and life unto God, seeing the Holy Spirit of God doth work in us by the power of Christ his death and resurrection, how should we most earnestly desire to know and to feel in ourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection!

But do we desire to know and to feel in ourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection? Do we with our apostle in this place reckon this knowledge amongst our chiefest vantages? Nay, alas! we know it not, neither care we to know it; for what dying unto sin and living unto God is there amongst us? In whom is the strength of sin abated, and the life of God renewed in the spirit of his mind? Doth the atheist leave his atheism, and embrace godliness? Doth the covetous person leave off to set his affection on the things which are on the earth, and set his affection on the things which are above? Doth the cruel oppressor leave off to grind the faces of the poor, and begin to be merciful? Doth the usurer leave off to lend his money upon usury, and begin to lend freely? Doth the swearer leave off to swear, and begin to fear an oath? Doth the filthy whoremonger and adulterer leave off his uncleanness, and begin to live chastely? Doth the contentious person leave off to brawl and contend with his neighbour, and begin to love quietness? Doth the drunkard leave his drunkenness, and begin to live soberly? &c. Doth any profane and wicked person leave off his profaneness and wickedness, and begin to live righteously and godly in this present world? Nay, so far are we from dying unto sin, and living unto God, that contrariwise we live unto sin, in sin, and we are dead in respect of the life of God. If we would deny it, yet do the judgments of God testify it unto our faces. Hath not the sword been shaken against us by the hand of a cruel and merciless enemy now a long time? Hath there not been cleanness of teeth in all our cities, scarceness of bread in all our places, even a

great dearth and famine throughout this whole land now a long time ? Hath not grievous sickness and mortality, great plagues and strange diseases, taken away many thousands of our people ? And is not the hand of the Lord still stretched out against us ? Do not dearth and famine on one hand, and sickness and mortality on another hand, still devour our people ? And are not these the messengers of God's fierce wrath against us for our sins ? Yes, certainly, even for our sins and iniquities are all these things come upon us. And because he hath smitten us, and we are not healed, because he hath laid his punishing hand upon us, and we have not turned from the wickedness of our ways unto him, therefore his wrath is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. No man knoweth the virtue of Christ his death, or careth to know it, but every man walketh after the ways of his own heart, and drinketh iniquity like water. No man knoweth the virtue of Christ his resurrection, or careth to know it ; but every man, instead of rising up unto holiness of life, riseth up to eat, drink, and play, and therefore doth the hand of God lie still so heavy upon us. Oh, my brethren, at length let us follow the counsel of the apostle, 'Let us mortify our earthly members, fornication, uncleanness, the inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry,' and let us 'bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.' Let us 'crucify the flesh with the affections and the lusts, and walk in the Spirit ;' let us 'put off the old man which is corrupt through the deceivable lusts, and let us put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' For this let us all know, that whosoever in this life dieth not this death which is unto sin, no man shall deliver his soul from the hand of the second death after this life ; and whosoever hath not his part in the first resurrection, which is from sin unto unrighteousness, he shall have no part in the second resurrection, which is unto glory and life everlasting. And such as do know and feel in themselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, them I exhort in the bowels of Christ Jesus, that with the apostle they desire and labour to know and to feel this virtue in themselves daily more and more. Stand fast against all the assaults of the devil, and quit yourselves like men ; embrace holiness, and follow after righteousness. While ye live, the flesh will rebel against the spirit, but strive daily more and more to subdue the flesh unto the spirit. Consider with yourselves with all godly care what sin it is that most doth haunt you, covetousness, or licentiousness, or pride, or hatred, or swearing, or lying, or the like, and fight against that, labour daily more and more against that, seek daily more and more to crush that in the head. Again, consider with yourselves what good thing ye are too dull and slack unto, hearing of the word, or liberality to the poor, or patience in adversity, or the like, and labour daily more and more

unto that, follow daily more and more after that, seek daily more and more after that. In a word, stir up every good grace of God in you, and refrain your feet from every evil path, that ye may know and feel in yourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection ; and do this daily more and more, that ye may feel in yourselves this virtue daily more and more.

The second thing which here I note is, from what root this knowledge of the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection issueth and springeth, and that is from the righteousness of faith ; for still we must remember, that these four last vantages whereof the apostle speaketh, do so follow the renouncing of all our own works, and the rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, as that they all issue from the first vantage that we have thereby, namely from the righteousness of Christ through faith. Whence I observe, that only they that are justified by the righteousness of Christ through faith, do feel in themselves, by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, whereby they die unto sin, and live unto God in righteousness and true holiness. And to this the apostle seemeth to give witness, when he saith, Acts. xv. 9, that our hearts are purified by faith ; for it is as if he should have said, we are purified and purged from dead works to serve the living God. But how is it ? It is by faith in Christ Jesus. So that the apostle's meaning is, that only they that are justified by faith in Christ Jesus, are purged from dead works to serve the living God ; for if this purification be by faith, then only they that have faith are thus purged. So our Saviour also saith, John xv. 4, 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' Whence it is most plain, that they only that are ingrafted into Christ Jesus by a true and lively faith in him, whereby they take hold of his righteousness, bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, dying unto sin, and living unto God in newness and holiness.

Why is it, then, that there is so little knowledge amongst us of the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection ? The reason is, only the faithful children of God know it. The rest they have no root in themselves, they want that true and lively faith whence such knowledge should spring. Let this, then, serve to rouse us out of the dead sleep of sin, and to awake us unto righteousness. That the death and resurrection of Christ work no better upon us, that we subdue not the flesh unto the spirit, that we serve sin, and give not our members servants unto righteousness in holiness, it is a plain argument of the want of faith in us ; and therefore our Saviour made it an argument against Judas, that he believed not, because he would betray him. 'But there are some of you,' saith our Saviour, John vi. 64, 'that believe not ; for,' saith the evangelist, 'Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him ;' where the argument is, that Judas had a

traitorous heart, therefore he believed not. In like manner, let us make the argument against ourselves ; our hearts are set on mischief, we drink iniquity like water, we die not unto sin, but we suffer sin to reign in our mortal bodies ; we live not unto God in righteousness, but we give our members servants unto unrighteousness ; we feel no virtue at all of Christ his death or resurrection in ourselves, therefore we believe not. The conclusion is hard, but if it be altered, the premises must be altered. Let us cease to do evil, and learn to do well ; let us die unto sin, and live unto God ; let us mortify our earthly members, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and then shall we have a good testimony unto ourselves of our righteousness by faith. In a word, justification, which is by faith, and regeneration, which is by the Spirit killing our old man, and quickening our new man, are so linked the one with the other, as that they are affirmed and denied both together ; for if we be justified by faith, then are we regenerate by the Spirit ; and if we be regenerate by the Spirit, then are we justified ; and again, unless we be justified by faith, we are not regenerate by the Spirit ; and unless we be regenerated by the Spirit, we are not justified by faith. As, therefore, we desire to have our justification by faith sealed unto our souls, so let us desire to know and feel in ourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, by dying unto sin, and living unto God in righteousness and true holiness. It followeth :—

And the fellowship of his afflictions, &c. This is the next vantage which the apostle reckons upon by renouncing all his own works as loss and dung, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, the knowledge in himself of Christ his afflictions, even such as he did suffer in the days of his flesh, and such as he doth daily suffer in his members ; and the reason he addeth why he would know in himself the fellowship of Christ his afflictions, namely, so to be made conformable unto Christ his death. It is, then, as if the apostle should have said, I make no reckoning of mine own righteousness by works, but my desire is, that being justified by the righteousness of Christ through faith, in such afflictions as Christ suffered in his own person for the glory of God and the good of his church, and such as still he suffereth in his members for his own glory and the good of his church, I may have fellowship and be partakers with them, because I desire to be made conformable unto Christ his death, *i. e.* like unto Christ who is dead, and through many afflictions is entered into his kingdom. What then ? Did the apostle desire outward afflictions in his body ? Yea, he counted it a great vantage to suffer afflictions such as Christ had suffered in his own person, and such as he did suffer in his members, for the glory of Christ and the good of his church.

Hence, then, I observe, that affliction and trouble for Christ his sake, and the good of his church, should

not seem grievous unto God his children, but rather they should count it a vantage unto them to be afflicted for his sake. Thus the Holy Ghost everywhere teacheth us : ‘ Rejoice,’ saith our Saviour, Mat. v. 12, ‘ and be glad when men revile you and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil sayings against you for my sake falsely.’ And the apostle James, chap. i. 2, ‘ Count it exceeding joy when ye fall into temptations,’ *i. e.* afflictions and tribulations whereby ye are tempted. And the apostle Peter, 1 Peter iv. 13, ‘ Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is among you to prove you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ his suffering,’ &c. ; and lest the Holy Ghost should seem without all reason to will us to rejoice in afflictions, and to count them vantage unto us, he hath set down many reasons why afflictions should not daunt us, or seem grievous, but rather joyous unto us, as, 1. affliction hath been always the lot of God’s children. It began, we see, even with Abel, whom his brother Cain slew, Gen. iv. 8. Jacob and Joseph, the children of Israel, David, Job, the prophets, the apostles of Christ, what afflictions suffered they ! ‘ Rejoice,’ saith our Saviour, ‘ when they persecute you ; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you ;’ yea, such persecutions and afflictions, both patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and all the holy men of God have suffered. 2. Afflictions are profitable instruments which God useth, thereby to draw us to the obedience of his will. For so saith the Lord by his prophet, Hos. v. 15, ‘ In their afflictions they will seek me diligently.’ So saith Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 18, ‘ that before the Lord corrected and chastised him by afflictions, he was an untamed calf.’ And David, Ps. cxix. 67, ‘ before I was afflicted I went wrong, but now I keep thy word ;’ and again, ver. 71, ‘ It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes.’ 3. Afflictions are a token of God’s love and favour towards us. For, as the apostle saith, Heb. xii. 6, ‘ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and he scourgeth every son that he receiveth.’ Sometimes we wander astray out of the right way wherein we should walk, and then as a good shepherd he sends his dog after us to pinch us, and rank us in our right order again. 4. Afflictions make us like unto Christ, as both the apostle sheweth here, and in the epistle to the Romans, chap. iii. 29, for as Isaiah had prophesied of him, so he was full of sorrows ; he wanted no sorrows, but he was full of sorrows. 5. The afflictions of God’s children they are Christ his afflictions ; whereinsoever they suffer, he suffereth with them. And therefore, when Saul persecuted them that called upon his name, he called unto him from heaven, saying, ‘ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?’ Because he persecuted his children, he counted that he persecuted him. 6. It pleaseth the Lord through afflictions to bring his children unto the kingdom ; for it is ordained that through many afflictions we should enter the kingdom. ‘ No

chastising,' saith the apostle, Heb. xii. 11, 'for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: but afterward it bringeth the quiet fruit of righteousness unto them which are thereby exercised.' And again, Peter, speaking to this purpose, saith, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 'wherein ye rejoice, 'though now for a season ye are in heaviness, that the trial of your faith being made much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto your praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' These and many more reasons the Holy Ghost commandeth unto us in the holy Scriptures wherefore we should rejoice in afflictions, and why we should count them a vantage unto us.

Art thou, then, afflicted and brought low through any oppression, through any cross or trouble? There hath no temptation taken thee, but such as appertaineth to the children of God; if thou belong unto him,

he thus afflicteth thee, that he may keep thee in obedience unto his will; that he may try thy faith and thy patience; that thou mayest know his love towards thee; that thou mayest be made like unto him; and that, after thou hast suffered with him, thou mayest also reign with him. Wheat by the flail is purged from the chaff, flour by the sieve is purged from the bran, and gold by the fire is purged from the dross; if we will be good wheat for the Lord his barn, the flail must go over us, and we must be winnowed; if we will be fine flour, we must be bolted and sifted; if we will be pure gold, we must be purged in the fire. Only let our care be that we suffer not as evil doers, but as Christians, for Christ his sake, and for the good of his church.

O Lord, as thou hast by the death of thy Son destroyed the death of sin, and by his, &c.

LECTURE LIX.

*And the fellowship of his afflictions, and be made conformable to his death, if by any means I may attain, &c.—
PHILIP. III. 10, 11.*

OH, but thou wilt say that thine afflictions, thy troubles, and thy sorrows are exceeding great and unsupportable. Look upon Job's afflictions in his goods, in his children, in his own person: he had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses; and of all these he was quickly deprived. Some the Sabeans, some the Chaldeans, took away violently, and some the fire of God consumed and burnt. He had also seven sons, and three daughters, and a very great family; and these all were slain at once by the fall of a house. Himself likewise was smitten with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown, so that he sat down in the ashes, and took a potsherd to scrape himself withal: his wife, which should have been his helper, bid him blaspheme God and die; his friends, which should have comforted him, increased his sorrows, so that every way he was most grievously afflicted. Compare now, then, thine afflictions and sorrows with his, and see what comparison there is betwixt them for greatness and grievousness. And if the Lord blessed his last days more than the first, in goods, and in children, and in every good blessing, then let not thy great affliction trouble thee, but hope thou in the Lord, and abide patiently on him, and he shall make thy way to prosper. Again, look upon Christ, persecuted Christ, even from his birth, forced to fly even then into Egypt for fear of Herod; tempted Christ, by the devil in the wilderness; poor Christ, not having a house to put his head in; betrayed Christ, by the hands of one of his own disciples; afflicted Christ, so that his sweat was like drops of blood, trickling down to the ground; punished Christ,

so that he cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' crucified Christ, even between two thieves. What are thine afflictions and thy sorrows in comparison of thy Christ's? He hath seasoned all thine afflictions and thy sorrows with his, so that, be they never so great, thou shouldest not be troubled therewith. Oh, but they come so thick upon thee, one on the neck of another, that thou art not able to look up. What! come they thicker upon thee than upon Jacob the patriarch? of whom we read, first, that he fled to Laban lest his brother Esau should kill him; when he was with Laban, he dealt ill with him, and changed his wages ten times; when he went from Laban, Laban pursued him, and if the Lord had not forbid him, would surely have hurt him; when he had escaped Laban, then he was again in great danger by his brother Esau; when he had escaped that danger, then his daughter Dinah was ravished, and his sons Simeon and Levi slew the Shechemites, and brought him into great danger there; when he went from thence, his wife Rachel in the way died in travail soon after, Reuben, his eldest son, went up unto his father's bed, and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. Could sorrows well come thicker upon a man? Job's sorrows likewise, how thick came they upon him? A messenger came to Job, and said, 'The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding in their places,' &c., Job i. 14 to verse 20. Anon, after this he was smitten with sore boils in his own person, as we have heard: when he was so, his wife came and spake as we have heard; and then after her came his miserable comforters. If thy sorrows, then, come thick upon thee, thou seest that nothing doth befall

thee but such as appertaineth to the children of God. Tarry thou, therefore, the Lord's leisure, be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart. Oh, but thou hast waited long, and yet dost find no ease. What! longer than David waited for the kingdom of Israel, after that he was anointed king over Israel by Samuel? After he was anointed by Samuel, he waited in great affliction, persecution and peril many years before he reigned over Judah, and after that he waited seven years and a half before he reigned over Israel. Hast thou waited longer than Christ himself did? He was full of sorrows all his life long. Thou mayest not prescribe God a time, thou must in patience possess thy soul. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning; and what if it come not the next morning; what if it come not the next week, the next month, the next year; nay, what if thy days be consumed with mourning? Oh, in the morning, when his glory shall appear, thou shalt be glad and rejoice. For the present thy faith and thy patience is exercised, and for the present it is grievous, but afterwards it bringeth the quiet fruit of righteousness unto thee that art exercised thereby. Oh, but thou wilt say, what comfort can I have in the mean time, seeing he afflieteth me as the wicked, and maketh no difference between me and the wicked? Oh, but thou art much deceived: he afflieteth thee, and he afflieteth the wicked, and it may be with like afflictions, but yet not in like sort; he afflieteth thee as a father, him as a judge; thee in mercy and in love, him in anger and displeasure; thee for thy correction and chastisement, him for a plague and punishment; he chastiseth thee with rods, but he woundeth him with the sword of an enemy; thou by thy corrections art kept in a child-like awe, he in a slavish fear; the effect of thine afflictions is, reformation of things past, and obedience afterwards to thy good, but the effect of his is hardness of heart, and rebellion against the highest; the end of thine is joy everlasting, the end of his is woe everlasting. Though, therefore, your afflictions seem to be like, yet is the whole course of them altogether unlike; in the beginning, in the manner, in the use, in the effect, in the end. What, then, though thine afflictions be great? It is a token that he hath given thee great grace and strength to stand; for 'he will not suffer his to be tempted above that they be able, but will even give the issue with the temptation, that they may be able to bear it,' 1 Cor. x. 13. What though thine afflictions be many? It is that, as gold purified seven times in the fire, thou mayest be found more precious at the appearing of Jesus Christ. What though thou hast waited long? It is that thy patience may have her perfect work, and that thou mayest be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. What though there be no odds unto thine outward sense between thy sufferings and the wicked? It is that thou mayest grow out of love with that restless and wretched life, and mayest long after that life where

there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, but life without death, joy without sorrow, rest without crying, and pleasure without pain.

If this will not serve to make thee brook thine afflictions, be they great, or many, or whatsoever they be, then consider these points Christianly and with a wise heart. 1. Consider what thou hast deserved if the Lord should deal with thee in weight and measure. Are thine afflictions and thy troubles proportioned to the desert of thy sins? Nay, if he should dispute with thine, thou couldst not answer him one thing of a thousand; if he would straitly mark thine iniquities, thou were not able to stand when he is angry. No sin that thou committest in the course of thy life, but the wages of it is death, even everlasting death both of body and soul, without the Lord's special mercy. What are, then, thine afflictions unto that thou hast deserved? 2. Consider how light and momentary thine afflictions are. For what if they be for a year? what if for twenty? what if for thy whole life? When the Lord had punished his people with seventy years captivity, 'For a moment,' saith he, 'in mine anger I hid my face from thee for a little season; but with everlasting love have I had compassion on thee,' Isa. liv. 8. Seventy years' captivity, it was but a little while, a moment, in comparison of his everlasting love. Even so the afflictions that thou sufferest, if they be for seventy, if for a hundred years, what is this in comparison of eternity? Who would make account of taking very bitter potions, and very sharp physic for three or four days together, in hope of health for ever after? What then if thy potions, if thy physic, if thine afflictions be for seventy or a hundred years! It is not so much as three or four days, nor so much as three or four hours, nay, nothing in comparison of eternity. And therefore the apostle very well calleth the afflictions of this life light and momentary afflictions, in respect of that eternal weight of glory reserved for them that stand fast unto the end, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 3. Consider what fruit in the end follows thine afflictions: Heb. xii. 11, 'They bring,' saith the apostle, 'the quiet fruit of righteousness unto them that are thereby exercised.' And in another place, 2 Cor. iv. 17, he saith that 'they cause unto us a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory,' which is not so to be understood as if by our afflictions we did merit an eternal weight of glory. 'For I count,' saith the apostle in another place, Rom. viii. 18, 'that the afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory that shall be shewed unto us;' but his meaning is that God in mercy rewardeth the light and momentary afflictions of this life with an eternal weight of glory, afflictions with glory, light afflictions with a weight of glory, momentary afflictions with eternal glory, light and momentary afflictions with an eternal weight of glory.

Let not afflictions, then, daunt us, but let us rather with our apostle desire to know in ourselves the fellow-

ship of Christ his afflictions, and let us count them a vantage unto us. ‘For the Lord correcteth him whom he loveth, even as the father doth the child in whom he delighteth,’ Prov. iii. 12. ‘And if we be without correction, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards, and not sons,’ Heb. xii. 8. The finest cloth, ye know, which a man weareth next unto his skin, will sometimes be nasty and slurred, and then it must be beaten, and washed, and wrung; and if it be not clean, then to it again, and beat it, and wash it, and wring it till it be clean and fit to be worn next the skin; but a sackcloth or hairecloth, we care not how black it be, neither do we wash or wring it. Beloved, we are so near unto Christ as that we are not next unto his skin, but we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones. And therefore to purge us and to make us clean he washeth us, and he wringeth us with afflictions. Sackcloth and hairecloth, be it as black as it will, he cares not for the whiting and cleansing of it, because it shall never come near unto his skin. He taketh no pleasure in it, and therefore he regardeth not the cleansing of it. Let us not therefore be troubled at afflictions. They are nothing proportionable to that we deserve; they are but light and momentary whatsoever they are, and in the end they cause unto us a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory. Let us therefore endure with patience, and let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. ‘For if we endure chastening, God offereth himself unto us as unto sons,’ Heb. xii. 7; and ‘blessed is he whom God correcteth,’ John v. 17. It followeth:—

And be made conformable, &c. Or, as Beza readeth it, ‘Whiles I am made conformable unto his death,’ i.e., unto Christ being dead; and so the sense is this, I judge all things without Christ to be dung, as for other vantages, so for this, that whilst I am made like to the image of Christ that is dead, by sufferings, I may know and feel in myself the fellowship of Christ his afflictions, such as he suffered in his person, and doth now suffer in his members. Here, then, I note two reasons why the apostle reckoned afflictions a vantage unto him—1. Because in afflictions he had fellowship with Christ. 2. Because by afflictions he was made like unto Christ. Whence I gather these two observations:—1. That in afflictions we have fellowship with Christ. 2. That afflictions make us like unto Christ. For the first, that in our afflictions we have fellowship with Christ, it is plain, both because he suffered the like afflictions before us, and because in all our afflictions he suffereth with us. For what affliction is it that we suffer? Is it poverty, persecution, hunger, agony in soul, punishment in body? Are we reviled, slandered, mocked, tempted by the devil? Do the wicked band themselves against us, unjustly accuse us, unjustly condemn us, unjustly put us to death? Are they of thine household thine enemies? Do they that eat bread at table with thee

lift up their heels against thee, and betray thee into the hands of the wicked and ungodly? All this way our Saviour Christ hath walked before us; he hath drunk of all these cups, and hath seasoned them unto us. Neither did he only suffer these and the like afflictions before us, but, as the head with the members, still he suffereth these and the like afflictions with us. How many, how great, how above measure were Paul’s troubles, by sea, by land, of friends, of enemies, in body, in spirit! yet calleth he them all the afflictions of Christ, because in them all Christ suffered with him. Lazarus likewise, in all his poverty, sickness, sores, griefs, and miseries, suffered nothing wherein Christ was not partaker of his grief. And if all the pains and miseries of that patient Job were now upon any of us, we should feel nothing which Christ felt not with us. For can any member of the body suffer, and not the head suffer with it? Nay, so long as this mystery is, which is for ever, that Christ is the head and we the body, so long if the body, or any member of the body, be hurt, shall Christ, which is the head, be touched with the point of it.

Oh what a great comfort must this needs be unto all the children of God. Here is a notable seasoning of all our afflictions. If we be poor, sick, persecuted, imprisoned, banished, whipped, &c., in every cross that we bear, the love of Christ is sealed unto us; in every suffering that we suffer, Christ suffereth with us. As therefore the apostle exhorteth, 1 Peter iv. 13, let us ‘rejoice in all our sufferings, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ his sufferings.’ For as Paul saith, ‘If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Christ; and if we bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life also of Jesus shall be made manifest in our mortal bodies,’ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

My second observation was, that afflictions do make us like unto Christ. He was consecrated the priuee of our salvation through afflictions. For taking our nature upon him, he filled it with the fulness of miseries, with all sorrows of flesh, with all anguish of mind, with persecution, with death, with sin, with condemnation, with hell: ‘And those whom God hath foreknown, he hath also predestinate to be made like unto the image of his Son,’ Rom. viii. 29, like unto him in many afflictions, that at the last they may be like unto him in eternal glory. Do sorrows then come thick upon us? The more the better, because the more the liker unto Christ, who was full of sorrows, as Isaiah had prophesied of him. Do we in agonies and bitterness of sorrows descend into hell? Christ hath also descended, and herein we are like unto him. If God have given unto us poverty, cold, nakedness, and much affliction, if we feel many troubles to rest upon us, if we feel that greatest trouble of an affrighted soul, and a mind oppressed, let us think with ourselves, how good is God unto us, thus to make the image of his only begotten Son to shine in us, that we carrying his image in us may die with him, and also reign with

him in the due time which he hath appointed. Let us look into all that ever we have, even into what thing soever pleaseth us best, into our goods, lands, possessions, buildings, riches, honour, health, favour, authority, friendship, wife, children, and the like; in all these things we cannot behold the lively image of Christ, nor by any of these things are we made like unto Christ. Affliction and troubles, humiliations and crosses, these are the things that make us like unto Christ; and the greater that our afflictions are, the liker we are unto Christ.

Let this, then, teach us with patience to bear whatsoever crosses do befall us. We are full of grief, but we are chastised of the Lord, because we should not be condemned with the world; we die with Christ, but because we should live with him; we suffer with Christ, but because we should reign with him; we weep with Christ, but because that Christ should wipe all tears from our eyes; we are afflicted on every side with Christ, but because we should be like unto him in all afflictions, and so be glorified with him in the day of glory, ‘Let us therefore run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God.’ Let us approve ourselves in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in tumults, in labours, and let us commit our souls unto God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Yea, let us rejoice in afflictions, inasmuch as they are a vantage unto us, inasmuch as in our afflictions we have fellowship with Christ, inasmuch as afflictions make us like unto Christ.

Now, if the question be asked, Whether, seeing afflictions are such a vantage unto us as that therein we have fellowship with Christ, and thereby we are made like unto Christ, whether, I say, we are to wish and desire afflictions and crosses? I answer, that we are to wish them, if by that means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead. For we are to wish, and we are to judge all things without Christ to be but dung, that we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead. If, therefore, by the means of affliction, or by any means, we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead, we are to wish that means, whatsoever it be. We are not, therefore, simply to wish for afflictions and crosses, being corrections and chastisements for our sins, but if the will of God be so that we suffer afflictions, we are to rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ his sufferings, and thereby made like unto Christ, and we are to wish, if by that or any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead. When, therefore, the apostle saith here, ‘If by any means,’ this *if* implieth not any doubting in the apostle, but an earnest desire in the apostle to attain to the resurrection of the dead. When he addeth, ‘if by any means,’ he implieth that the fellowship

of Christ his afflictions is not the only means whereby we attain unto the resurrection of the dead, but some without persecution at all, some not without persecution, but without effusion of their blood, and some by martyrdom, attain to the resurrection of the dead. Now the apostle signifieth that it is all one to him if by any means, the first, second, or third, he may attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Lastly, by the resurrection of the dead the apostle meaneth the glorious resurrection of the saints unto life everlasting. It is, then, as if the apostle had said, I do judge all things without Christ to be but dung, that I may win Christ, that I may know Christ, and the virtue of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his afflictions, and that I may attain to the glorious resurrection of the saints, if by any means, or desiring by any means, affliction, or any means, to attain and come unto the glorious resurrection of the saints, whereby they are raised unto glory, and life, and immortality. Now for the notes.

1. For the note of doubting, which hence our adversaries would gather, we shall have occasion to speak of it in the next verse, by occasion of those words, *if that I may.*

2. I note that albeit all the saints of God attain to the glorious resurrection of the dead by the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead; for he was made ‘the first fruits of them that sleep,’ and his resurrection is a sure pledge of our resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 20; yet do not all the saints of God attain to the resurrection of the dead by the same means. For some have attained to the resurrection of the dead without any persecution that we read of, as that good old Simeon, Luke ii. 28, 29, that took our Saviour in his arms, and praised God, and said, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word,’ &c.; likewise Zacharias, and Elizabeth, and Anna, and others. Others have attained to the resurrection of the dead, not without persecution and manifold afflictions, but yet without martyrdom and effusion of their blood, as Jacob, David, and divers others. And others have attained to the resurrection of the dead, but not without martyrdom and cruel effusion of their blood, as many of the prophets, John Baptist, Stephen, James, Paul, Peter, and divers others: all which were saints of God, and all which died in the Lord, and all of them, no doubt, wished, as Paul did, to attain to the resurrection of the dead, if by any means they might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Whence I observe, 1, that the way unto the heavenly Jerusalem is not only by violent death inflicted by the hand of the cruel and bloody persecutor, but that very many also are gathered unto their fathers in peace, and so sleep in the Lord. For as it is a blessing given unto God’s children, not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer even death for his sake, and so to enter into glory, so it is also a blessing given unto

God's children to go to their grave in peace, and so to be received into the everlasting habitations. So it was reckoned unto Abraham for a blessing that he 'died in a good age, an old man, and of great years, and was gathered to his people,' Gen. xxv. 8. So it was reckoned unto David for a blessing that 'he died in a good age, full of days, riches, and honour,' 1 Chron. xxix. 28. So unto Josiah, that 'he was put into his grave in peace,' 2 Kings xxii. 20; and generally to go to the grave in peace is a blessing of God upon his children. And therefore gross and absurd was their error, who, thinking martyrdom the only means to attain unto the resurrection of the dead, voluntarily offered themselves, as it were, to the knife of the butcher. Only this, if the will of the Lord be so, that by a violent death we shall glorify his name, we are patiently to submit ourselves unto his will; to which purpose is my second observation hence.

Secondly, Hence I observe that, if we will attain unto the glorious resurrection of the saints that are dead and die in the Lord, if we will be partakers with Christ in his glory, then must we not refuse to drink of the same cup that he hath drunk, we must not refuse to be partakers with him in his afflictions, but if by that means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead, we must patiently endure it. For, as saith the apostle, Heb. xii. 9, 10, 'If we have had the fathers of our bodies which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, should we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, that we may live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.' 'We must through many afflictions,' saith the Holy Ghost, Acts xiv. 22, 'enter into the kingdom of God.' If, there-

fore, the Lord will that we come by the cross unto the crown, let us take up our cross and follow Christ. I use no other arguments to move you hereunto than we have already spoken of; they are a vantage unto us; in them all Christ suffereth with us; they make us like unto Christ, therefore let us not refuse the chastening of the Lord, whereby he offereth himself unto us as unto sons, and let us rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ his sufferings.

My last observation hence is, that the glorious resurrection unto life everlasting is the mark whereat we are always to aim in the whole course of our life. 'If the dead be not raised again, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also vain,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 14; and again, ver. 30, 'If the dead be not raised again, why are we in jeopardy every hour?' and again, ver. 32, 'If I have fought with beasts at Ephesus after the manner of men, what advantageth it me, if the dead be not raised up?' and again, ver. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men the most miserable.' All which, albeit they be brought to prove the resurrection of the dead, yet do they likewise shew that the apostle, in his preaching, and in his suffering, and in all that he did, ever respected the resurrection of the dead. And so we ought in all things evermore to aim at the resurrection of the dead. And this ought to make us both do all things cheerfully and suffer all things willingly, knowing that there shall be a glorious resurrection of the just, and that we shall receive reward, through the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, for whatsoever good we have done, and for whatsoever temptation we have suffered, in the resurrection of the just.

LECTURE LX.

Not as though I had already attained unto it; but one thing I do, I forget that which is behind, and endeavour myself, &c.—PHILIP. III. 12.

THUS we have heard how the apostle, for the confirmation of those false teachers that were erect in among the Philippians, hath instructed them by his own example in the point touching man's righteousness before God, namely, that they were not to repose any confidence in their own righteousness which is by works, but to repose all their confidence in the righteousness of Christ, which is through faith; for he judged all his own works to be but loss and dung in respect of any righteousness before God, and he rejoiced only in Christ Jesus, that he might win Christ, that he might know Christ, and the virtue of his resurrection, &c., and, therefore, the Philippians were to do so too, and we so too.

Now, the apostle goeth forward, and as before by his own example he taught them what to think of

man's righteousness before God, so now by his own example he teacheth them still to labour to increase in the way of godliness, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and of the virtue of his resurrection, &c. And he taketh occasion so to do upon that which he had said before; for he had said before, that he thought all things loss for the excellent knowledge sake of Christ Jesus, and that he judged all things to be dung that he might win Christ, that he might know Christ, &c. Now, hereupon haply it might be thought that he was grown to an excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, he was perfect in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Did he take such pleasure and comfort in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that for it he thought all things loss and dung? Here was perfection indeed, he was come to the race's end, he needed no more. No, no,

saih the apostle ; for all this I am but in the way, I have not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ, I am not perfect in the knowledge of Christ, I follow and labour after it with all main and might that I have, I am entered the lists, I am in the way, and I never look behind me, but still I go forward ; and albeit I be not at my race's end, yet still I am looking toward the mark that is set before me, and I make towards the mark as hard as ever I can. Thus the apostle, by his own example, sets an edge on them to run forward in the race that they had begun in Christ Jesus, and to labour still to increase in the knowledge of Christ Jesus ; which he did the rather because of those false teachers that were amongst them, that told them that they knew Christ well enough, and that they were come to great perfection in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, in that they knew him to be the Messias, to be God and man, to be the reconciliation for the sins of the whole world ; and now they were to look to the observation and keeping of Moses's law, and to join it unto Christ, so to be made righteous before God. Because of these (I say) the apostle having taught them that not anything is to be joined unto Christ to be made righteous by it, doth now stir them up, by his own example, to labour continually to increase in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Thus much for the general scope and meaning of these words.

Now, let us yet a little more particularly examine these words. 'Not,' saith the apostle, 'as though I had already attained to it.' To it; to what ? To the perfect knowledge of Christ ; for the apostle had said before, that he 'thought all things loss for the excellent knowledge' sake of Christ,' and that he 'judged them to be dung that he might win Christ, that he might know Christ,' &c., and hereupon it might be thought that he had already attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection, &c., whereby he might attain to the resurrection of the dead. But no, saith the apostle, 'I judge all things to be dung, that I may know Christ : not as though I had already attained' to the perfect knowledge of Christ. Again, it is to be observed that he saith, 'not as though I had already,' or 'not as though I had now attained to it' ; whereby the apostle signifieth, that as now his state stands, he hath not attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ. He addeth, 'either were now perfect,' to wit, in the knowledge of Christ, and so of the virtue of his resurrection, &c. He addeth, 'but I follow,' διώκω, where the word doth not simply signify to follow, but to follow as the persecutor, that will not rest till he have him whom he persecuteth, or to follow as the runner, that will not rest till he come to the goal's end. By this, then, he signifieth how greedily and incessantly he pursueth after the perfect knowledge of Christ, having it, as it were, in chase. 'I follow,' saith he, 'if I may comprehend that,—that is, desiring to catch hold of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus,—'even as I also am comprehended of Christ Jesus,' that is, even as Christ Jesus hath caught hold on me ; that is, desiring that as Christ hath perfectly caught hold of me by his gracious mercy towards me, so I may catch hold of the knowledge of Christ Jesus perfectly by the like his gracious mercy towards me. And so I read in this place, not as it is in our Bibles, 'for whose sake,' but 'even as,' ἵψεις, the phrase which the apostle useth suffering it, and the scope of the apostle leading unto it. It is, then, as if the apostle should have said, I thank my God I know Christ, and the virtue of his resurrection, &c., and I take great comfort and pleasure in the knowledge of Christ, and I think all things but loss for this excellent knowledge' sake ; not as though I had now attained unto this knowledge perfectly, or were now (as I am now Paul, aged, and taught by God in the ways of God) perfect in the knowledge of Christ ; nay, I now know him only in part, but I follow this knowledge even with eager and incessant pursuit, desiring that I may comprehend and catch hold of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, even as perfectly, and in the like mercy that he hath comprehended and caught hold of me. This I take to be the true meaning of these words, and it is not my meaning now, or at any time, to trouble you with varieties and diversities of expositions.

In these words, then, I note these points : first, the apostle's acknowledgment of his own imperfection, in these words, 'not as though,' &c. ; secondly, the apostle's eager pursuit after perfection, in these words, 'but I follow,' &c. Now, let us see what observations we may gather hence for our use and instruction.

Not as though, &c. Here you see that the apostle acknowledgeth that, as yet, he had not attained to the full knowledge of Christ, to a thorough feeling of the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection in himself, to a perfect fellowship of Christ his afflictions. He laboured to attain to the resurrection of the dead in glory, by communicating with Christ in his afflictions, by dying unto sin, and living unto God through the power of Christ his death and resurrection, by knowing Christ with a feeling knowledge of him in his own soul. But he saith that he hath not yet perfectly attained unto these things, whereby he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. And he amplifieth it by this particle *now*, saying, that now he had not attained unto these things, now that he had shaken off all impediments and hindrances unto perfection in these things, now that he had renounced all confidence in his own works, and in all things without Christ, now that he laboured to attain to the knowledge of Christ in his own soul, to the knowledge of the virtue of Christ his resurrection, to the knowledge of the fellowship of Christ his afflictions in himself, if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead, yet not as yet he had attained to the full knowledge of Christ in himself, to a thorough feeling

of the virtue of Christ his resurrection in himself, to a perfect fellowship of Christ his afflictions.

My observation hence is, that all the faithful children of God, how plentifully soever endowed with the knowledge of Christ, the hatred of sin, the love of righteousness, the fellowship of Christ his afflictions, yet only knew Christ in this life in part, only die unto sin, and live unto God, and are partakers of Christ his afflictions in part; not one that perfectly knoweth Christ, that perfectly feeleth the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection in himself, that is perfectly partaker of Christ his afflictions. For is it not a good reason? Paul, that holy apostle of Christ Jesus, that chosen vessel of God to bear Christ his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; aged Paul, that had begotten many in the faith and knowledge of Christ Jesus, that had now long borne in his body the dying of Christ Jesus, that had his conversation in heaven, that had suffered more than all the rest; he, I say, know Christ, and the virtue of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his afflictions only in part, not perfectly; therefore, none of all the faithful children of God in this life either knows Christ, or dies to sin, or lives to God, or is conformed by afflictions and sufferings unto Christ his death perfectly, but only in part. Yes, surely the reason holds most strongly, Paul's prerogatives being not any way inferior to any of the best and most faithful children of God. Now, the reason why in this life our knowledge, our love, our faith, our death unto sin, our life unto God, our whole obedience, all our righteousness, all our holiness, is in part only, why these things in this life are not perfect in any of the children of God, the reason, I say, is because our regeneration and sanctification in this life are not perfect, we are not perfectly renewed in the spirit of our minds, God giveth unto us the Spirit by measure; for unto Christ alone hath God given the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34, but unto every one of us he hath given the Spirit by measure, Rom. xii. 3. He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification; in him dwelleth all the fulness of these things plentifully, and of his fulness we all receive; not fulness of his fulness, but of his fulness of the Spirit and all spiritual graces we receive, as it were, the first fruits of the Spirit and of all spiritual graces, wherewith then only we shall be filled, when mortality shall put on immortality, and when corruption shall put on incorruption. Which the apostle also witnesseth, where he saith, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, that 'now we see through a glass darkly, but then shall we see face to face: now we know in part, but then shall we know even as we are known.' Now, in this life, in part and imperfectly, and then only when we shall see Christ face to face, shall we know him perfectly. 'For when that which is perfect is come, then shall that which is in part be abolished,' but not before.

Neither is it only so in our knowledge, but in our faith, in our love, even in our whole obedience. Paul himself while he lives shall have messengers of Satan to buffet him, he shall have pricks in the flesh, and he shall feel a law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, and leading him captive unto the law of sin which is in his members.

Here, then, first, is notably confuted that imaginary perfection which some dream that the children of God may have in this life. This holy apostle attained not unto the perfection either of the knowledge of Christ, or of obedience unto his will; what perfection, then, can there be in any of God's children in this life? They say that no man, indeed, can attain to that absolute perfection, either of that knowledge or of that righteousness which shall be in heaven, but that they may attain unto such perfection as is required in this life. As if either God might not require of us in this life such perfection as he gave unto us in our creation, or as if, where such remnants of sin and ignorance are as stick fast unto us, there could be such perfection. For, I demand, hath God concluded all under sin? The apostle Paul saith so, Gal. iii. 22; and John likewise saith, 1 John i. 8, that 'if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' What perfection, then, where there is such transgression! Again, did not God create us after his own image in righteousness and true holiness, without sin, or ignorance, or any such thing? It is clear, and cannot be denied! And what was our perfection then? Now that ignorance hath blinded us, and sin hath defiled us, have we such perfection now? Or may not God require such perfection of us now in this life? How did we lose it? Was it not by our own default? And may not, then, God require it of us. True it is he cannot have it of us, because we have lost it. But because we have lost it, should we not have it? Yes, surely we have lost it, but we should have it, and therefore he may require it of us; we should have it, but we have lost it, therefore is the punishment due unto us for it. True it is we are often exhorted to be perfect, but those exhortations only shew unto us what perfection should be in us, not what perfection is in us. Yea, the whole law is a perfect rule, not of that we do, but of that we should do, and of that which God may require of us. All our perfection is only in Christ Jesus, who hath perfectly fulfilled that which we should, but could not, and for whose sake all our imperfections are covered, and not imputed unto us. He is our perfection, we are full of imperfections, and in his perfection are all our imperfections hid and covered.

Again, here is a notable comfort for all such of God's children as feel in themselves any imperfections, any wants of those things after which their soul longeth. The blessed apostle had not, now when he wrote these things, attained to the perfection of the

knowledge of Christ, of the virtue of his resurrection, or of the fellowship of his afflictions. Why art thou, then, troubled, and why is thy soul disquieted within thee for such imperfections as thou feelest in thyself? Thou knowest not thy Christ as thy soul desirereth; thou findest not that sweetness of his word in thyself that thou shouldest; thou feelest not thy flesh so subdued unto the spirit as it should be; thou dost not walk in that obedience unto thy God that thou shouldest; thou art not so zealous in all holy duties as thou shouldest be; thou dost not take such pleasure in the things that belong unto thy peace as thou shouldest do. None of all the children of God that come not far short of that they should in all these things; and the more holy that they are, the more they see their wants. How often doth David pray unto the Lord to teach him his statutes, to open his eyes that he may see the wondrous things of his law, to establish his word in him, to incline his heart unto his testimonies, and not unto covetousness, to quicken him in his righteousness? Read the 119th Psalm, where thou shalt find that that holy prophet hath even poured out his soul in many such prayers. Oh, but thou dost not only feel in thyself the want of such perfections as thou shouldest have, but thou feelest such imperfections as thou shouldest not have. Thou art dull, and sluggish, and heavy, and lumpish; there is no edge in thee unto the things that belong unto thy peace. Dost thou know and feel in thyself these imperfections? This same is a piece of thy perfection, to see, and know, and acknowledge thine imperfections. Luke xviii. 11-13, the proud pharisee he talks of nothing but his perfections; it is the poor publican that feels his imperfections, and that, not daring therefore to lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, strikes his breast, saying, 'O God, be merciful unto me, a sinner!' And what is it that makes thee feel thine imperfections? It is the life of God in thee that makes thee that thou seest thy dulness, and lumpishness, and that thou canst not abide it, but grievest at it. Them that are dead in their sins thou seest to go on in the wickedness of their ways, neither are they ever touched with any remorse or feeling of their wants and imperfections. Yea, David, so long as he lay dead, as it were, in that sin which he had committed in the matter of Uriah, he never felt any remorse; but when once the life of God began to awake in him by the word of Nathan, then he said, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' This, then,—that thou feelest and acknowledgest thine imperfections,—is a token of the life of God in thee. The greatest imperfection that the young man in the gospel had, was the great conceit which he had of his perfection: Mat. xix. 20, 'All these commandments,' saith he, 'I have observed from my youth up, what lack I yet?' He could not see any imperfection in himself, till Christ bade him sell all that he had, and give to the poor, &c., and then he saw it, but the

text saith nothing of his acknowledging it with remorse for it. To stand, then, upon our perfection is our greatest imperfection; and to see and acknowledge our imperfection with remorse, is a great point of our perfection.

Let not, then, thine imperfections dismay thee. It is well that thou feelest them; it is a point of thy perfection, and it is a token of the life of God in thee; and if thou feltest them not, thy disease were a great deal more dangerous. Oh, but therefore thou art troubled, because thou feelest thine imperfections more than thou wast wont. Oh, but comfort thyself rather in those mercies that thou wast wont to find, for he that hath begun a good work in thee, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, Philip. i. 6. He is immutable, and so is his love immutable; for whom he loveth once, he loveth unto the end, John xiii. 1. It was David's case, as himself witnesseth, where he thus saith, Ps. lxxvii. 6-9, 'I called to remembrance my song in the night, I communed with mine own heart, and my spirit searched diligently. Will the Lord absent himself for ever, and will he shew no more favour? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore. Hath God forgotten to be merciful? hath he shut up his tender mercies in displeasure?' where the prophet sheweth how he was wont to praise the Lord in the night season for his loving mercies. But now the Lord had seemed to shut up his tender mercies in displeasure; and this he saith in the next verse was his death, even the want of the feeling of God's goodness, he saith, was his death: 'yet,' saith he, ver. 10, 'I remembered the years of the right hand of the Most High,' where he signifieth that he recovered himself by remembering the former times, wherein God had manifested his goodness towards him. Let not, then, thy present want disquiet thee, but comfort thyself in the remembrance of his former goodness towards thee. Though he seem for a little to hide his face from thee, yet will he not leave nor forsake thee, but in his good time he will perfect his good work in thee.

But I follow. Here I note the apostle's eager pursuit after perfection. He had not yet attained unto it, but he followed eagerly after it, as the persecutor who will not rest till he have him whom he persecuteth; or as the runner, who will not rest till he come at his goal's end. He was so desirous to grow daily more and more in the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection, &c., that he shook off all impediments and lets which might hinder him in that course, and laboured daily more and more in all things to grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ. Whence I observe a necessary duty for all Christians, which is, that they labour daily more and more to grow up in the knowledge of Christ, in obedience to his will, in holiness and righteousness, and in all things to aim evermore at the mark of perfection; and to this purpose are those often exhortations, 'Be ye

perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' Mat. v. 48; 'My brethren, be ye perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind,' &c., 2 Cor. xiii. 11; 'Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and entire, lacking nothing,' James i. 4: all which and the like places shew what we ought to strive unto, even unto the perfection of God. Christians may not stand at a stay, but they must grow forward from grace unto grace, from virtue to virtue, from strength to strength, till they become perfect men in Christ Jesus. 'Grow,' saith the apostle, 2 Pet. iii. 18, 'in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!' And to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 15, 16, 'Let us follow the truth in love, and in all things grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ, by whom all the body, being coupled and knit together by every joint for the furniture thereof, receiveth increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.' And for the Colossians, the apostle prayed, chap. i. 10, that 'they might increase in the knowledge of God.' Yea, everywhere almost, the Holy Ghost urgeth this spiritual growth in all the children of God in all spiritual graces in heavenly things.

Here then, first, they are justly to be reproved that either care not at all to know Christ, and the virtue of his resurrection, &c.; or if they have a little knowledge, content themselves with that, and never thirst to increase with the increasing of God. Too, too many such careless and carnal Christians there be, as know not, nor care to know the things that belong unto their peace. They follow, and they eagerly follow; but what? Honours, riches, pleasures, worldly commodities. They follow not with the apostle the knowledge of Christ, &c.; they care not for God, neither is God in all their thoughts. Other too, too careless Christians likewise there be, that, thinking they have some knowledge, content themselves with that, and greatly seek not after more; and therefore they come not at church, they come not at sermons, or now and then when they list; some of

them know as much as the preacher can tell them, and some of them know as much as will serve their turn. But they know nothing as they ought to know, unless their knowledge work in them a thirsting desire after more knowledge; for hereby shall we know that we know Christ, if we eagerly long in our souls to have this knowledge of Christ daily more and more increased in us. If, then, we will have this testimony unto our own souls that we have attained unto some knowledge of Christ, let us labour with the apostle, that we may comprehend and catch hold of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, as perfectly as he hath comprehended and caught hold of us, if we belong unto him. Let us labour daily more and more to grow from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge, till we come unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.

Again, here is another notable comfort for such o God's children as are troubled with the consideration of their imperfections. Thou feelest thine imperfections; it is well. Dost thou long in thy soul after perfection? Desirest thou to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding? Wouldst thou gladly grow up in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus? Doth the consideration of thine imperfections set thee unto God in prayer, unto him that he will disburden thee of thy wants, that he will shew forth the light of his loving countenance unto thee, and that he will guide thy feet into the way of peace? All the world could not set thee in a better course to perfection. It is the way that the apostle hath chalked before thee, who, having not attained unto perfection, acknowledged it, and followed after it. Let not thine imperfections, then, trouble thee; none of God's children but they have their imperfections. If thou (though in great imperfection) follow toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, thou hast great comfort.

LECTURE LXI.

But I follow, if I may comprehend that, even as I am comprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself that I have attained.—PHILIP. III. 12, 13.

NOW in that the apostle saith, 'but I follow if I may comprehend,' hence our adversaries take a proof of that uncomfortable doctrine of doubting of our salvation; as also from that in the former verse, where he saith, 'if by any means,' &c. For, say they, if St Paul ceased not to labour still, as though he were not sure to come unto the mark without continual endeavour, what security may we poor sinners have of salvation by only faith? And if St Paul followed if he might comprehend, as though he were not sure to comprehend, what security may we poor sinners have that we shall comprehend? No, indeed, poor

wretches, and the poorer and wretcheder for your doubting; if ye gather thus from these and the like places, ye can have little security of your salvation. St Paul ceased not to labour and endeavour still unto the mark; doth it follow hereupon that he was not sure to come to the mark? When Hezekiah was so sore sick, 2 Kings xx., was he not sure that he should be restored to health? Yes; he had the Lord his word for it by his prophet, and for a farther confirmation of his faith, he had a sign to assure it; and yet he ceased not to use the means that God had ordained for the recovery of his health. Our apostle in that

dangerous voyage towards Rome, Acts xxvii. 23, 24, was he not sure that both he and all his company should be saved from the peril of the waters? Yes; the angel of God had assured him both of his own life, and of all theirs that sailed with him; yet he ceased not to use all means that they might all come safe to land. So for his salvation in the day of Christ, he knew and was sure that 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should be able to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 38, 39. Yet he ceased not, as here we see, to labour and endeavour still unto the mark; he laboured, desiring by any means to attain unto the resurrection of the dead. And so, generally, we say that all the faithful children of God are and may be, by faith in Jesus Christ, sure of their salvation; yet, we say that they are to labour to attain to the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection, &c., whereby they may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; for we do not teach or promise security of salvation by only faith, but unto those that labour in their calling, and are fruitful in good works, which may serve to acquit us of that careless security and presumptuous certainty which, they say, we teach men. We know that as God hath ordained the end, so he hath ordained the means unto the end; and therefore we teach, both that the children of God may and are to ground the certainty of their salvation upon the sweet promises of God in Christ Jesus, wherein there can be no vain presumption; and that they are to labour and endeavour, by walking in such good works as God in Christ Jesus hath ordained them unto, to have a sure testimony unto themselves of their salvation, which must needs banish careless security. Oh but they could be as sure of their salvation as we think ourselves, if it were specially revealed unto them by God, as Hezekiah his health unto him, and Paul's safety unto him. I demand, then, have they no assurance from God of their salvation? No marvel, then, that they doubt of their salvation. But we are sure of our salvation, because 'the Spirit of God doth witness unto our spirit that we are the sons of God; and if sons, then also heirs, even the heirs of God, and heirs annexed with Christ,' Rom. viii. 16, 17. So that we have two witnesses to assure us of our salvation, God's Spirit and our own spirit, certified by the Spirit of God. Yea, but why doth the apostle say, 'if I may comprehend,' if he were sure to comprehend and come unto the mark? This *if* argues a doubting. Not so, but some difficulty in the thing which he earnestly wisheth, as also it often signifieth. 'I magnify,' saith the apostle, Rom. xi. 13, 14, 'mine office, to try if by any means I might procure them of my flesh to follow them, and might save some of them.' Doth the apostle doubt of saving some of the Jews by his ministry, because he saith, 'if I might save some of them'? No; but thereby he

signifieth his earnest desire to do it, and the difficulty of doing it. Again, 'Pray God,' saith Peter unto Simon Magus, Acts viii. 22, 'that if it be possible the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee.' Doth the apostle doubt of God's mercies to him if he could repent, because he saith *if it be possible*, &c.? No; but thereby he gives him to understand of the difficulty of obtaining pardon for that sin, that so he might see the wickedness of his sin. So the apostle here saith that he laboureth, 'if by any means he may attain,' &c., and that 'he followeth if he may comprehend,' not that he doubteth of attaining to the glorious resurrection of the dead, or of comprehending; but thereby he signifieth his earnest desire to attain unto it, and withal the difficulty of attaining unto it. For, as the apostle saith elsewhere, 2 Tim. ii. 5, 'No man is crowned except he strive lawfully'; i.e. except he do and endure whatsoever is to be done and suffered until he come to his race's end. He must devour all difficulties that will have the crown in that day. And these difficulties increased the apostle his desire, so that he laboured if he might attain, and followed if he might comprehend. Thus, then, ye see that this place maketh nothing for that uncomfortable doubting of our salvation which they labour to persuade.

Nay, to speak in one word unto the whole point, the whole stream of the Scriptures maketh against this doubting, and for the certainty of our salvation. 'I am sure,' saith Job, chap. xix. 25-27, 'that my Redeemer liveth, and he shall stand the last on the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet shall I see God in my flesh; whom I myself shall see, and mine eyes shall behold, and none other for me.' So Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth,' saith he, 'is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' What! To him only? Nay, saith he, but to all them also that love his appearing. Mark, then, the ground whereupon he builds the certainty of salvation; even upon that ground which is common to him with all the faithful, the love of God in Christ Jesus. So that by the power of the same Spirit, and upon the same ground that Job and Paul assured themselves of their salvation, may all the faithful children of God assure themselves of their salvation. Again, doth not the Holy Ghost define faith to be 'the ground of things which are hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen;' a 'full assurance,' an 'assurance without wavering,' the 'anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast?' It is clear. And is it not as clear that we may certainly know that we have faith? The Rhemists* themselves acknowledge it upon that place of the apostle, 'Prove yourselves whether ye are in the faith.' And may we not, then, assure ourselves of our salvation? 'Verily, verily,' saith our Saviour Christ, John v. 24, 'he that heareth

* Rhem. in 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death unto life ; where everlasting salvation is assured unto him that believeth, as surely as if he were already in full possession of it. Yea, everlasting salvation is assured unto him that loveth the brethren, as surely as if he were already in full possession of it, as St John witnesseth, 1 John iii. 14, where he saith, ‘ We know that we are translated from death unto life, because we love the brethren.’ Infinite almost are the places which plainly shew that we may and ought to assure ourselves of our salvation.

I grant that even the best of God’s children oftentimes do stagger, and waver, and doubt, and have divers splices and sparkles of infidelity and distrust arising in their hearts. For so long as we live, both our knowledge, and our love, and our faith, and our hope, and the best graces that we have, are only in part, and unperfect ; our knowledge not without some mixture of ignorance, our love not without some mixture of hatred, our faith not without some mixture of infidelity, our hope not without some mixture of distrust. But this is it that we teach, that the children of God may and ought to assure themselves of their salvation. Indeed, if we look upon ourselves, our own works, and our own worthiness, we may justly doubt of our salvation, having in ourselves deserved everlasting damnation. But the ground and foundation of the certainty of our hope is the sure promise of God in Christ Jesus, who hath promised in his word eternal life to all them that believe in his name. We look not on ourselves, but we look on him that hath promised, even as Abraham did, whose faith we are to follow ; of whom it is said, Rom. iv. 19–21, that ‘ he neither did consider his own body, which was now dead, being almost an hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah’s womb, neither did he doubt of the promise through unbelief’ (where note by the way how doubting is termed unbelief), ‘ but was strengthened in the faith, and gave glory to God, being fully assured that he which had promised was also able to do it.’ He then being faithful which hath promised salvation to all them that believe in his name, we may and ought to be sure of our salvation. To conclude, therefore, this point, beware lest at any time ye be deceived by such as out of this, or the like places of Scripture, would persuade you that ye ought to doubt of your salvation. Neither this nor any other place makes for it, but the whole course of Scripture makes against it. Let us with our apostle labour, ‘ if by any means we may attain,’ &c., and let us follow, ‘ if we may comprehend,’ not doubting of it, but running through all difficulties even with all eagerness. Let us strive lawfully, and as we ought to do, that we may be crowned ; and let us keep fast the profession of our hope without wavering, because he is faithful that hath promised.

Now in that he addeth, ‘ If I may comprehend even as I am comprehended of Christ Jesus,’ the apostle signifieth his earnest desire to come unto the perfect knowledge of Christ Jesus, that he may know fully even all the riches of wisdom, and knowledge, and righteousness, and salvation that are hid in him ; for he saith that he followeth and earnestly laboureth to comprehend the knowledge of Christ Jesus, even as he is comprehended and known of Christ Jesus, which is most perfectly. For, Ps. cxxxix. 1–3, 12–15, ‘ he knoweth his down-sitting and up-rising, he understandeth his thoughts afar off : he is about his path, and about his bed, and spieth out all his ways ; there is not a word in his tongue but he knows it wholly : he hath possessed his reins, and covered him in his mother’s womb ; his eyes did see him when he was yet without form, and in his book were all his members written, which day by day were fashioned when as yet there was none of them.’ If he climb up into heaven, if he lie down in hell, if he take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, if he say the darkness shall hide him, still he knoweth him altogether. Yea, he sanctifieth him throughout, in spirit, and soul, and body, and so likewise knows him throughout, even most perfectly. And even such a perfect knowledge would he have of Christ Jesus, that he might be ‘ able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of him, and that he might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that so he might be filled with all fulness of God.’ Whence all Christians are lessoned to labour and strive in the whole course of their life unto perfection, unto perfection in the knowledge of Christ, unto perfection in obedience unto Christ, unto the perfection of mortification in their earthly members by the virtue of Christ his death, and unto the perfection of holiness and righteousness by the virtue of Christ his resurrection. True it is that we cannot attain unto perfection in any of these things, in the knowledge of Christ, or in obedience unto his will, or in dying unto sin, or in living unto God. The apostle could not ; and how, then, should we, being compassed with no fewer infirmities than he was, and being strengthened with no more powerful assistance of the Spirit than he was ? But yet we are to labour that our understandings may be perfectly instructed in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that our wills may be perfectly conformed unto God’s will, that our affections and the lusts of our flesh may be perfectly subdued unto the Spirit, and that we may be perfectly renewed in the spirit of our minds. So we are exhorted when it is said, Mat. v. 48, ‘ Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect ;’ and again when it is said, 1 Pet. i. 15, ‘ Be ye holy, for I am holy ;’ be ye holy even in all manner of conversation. And to the same purpose it is said, 1 John iii. 3, that ‘ every man that hath hope in Jesus Christ purgeth himself, even as he

is pure.' In all which places the Holy Ghost doth not shew unto us what perfection, or holiness, or purity is in us, even the best of us, but that we should labour and strive unto this, that we may be perfect as God is perfect, holy as God is holy, pure as God is pure. The reason is, because God hath chosen us in Christ Jesus, 'that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,' Eph. i. 4. We must not, therefore, stand at a stay, or think it enough that we are before many of our brethren in knowledge, or righteousness, or holiness, but as it is said of Christ Jesus that 'he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man,' so we must increase and grow daily from knowledge to knowledge, from strength unto strength, from grace unto grace, until we become perfect men in Christ Jesus.

But is it not with us as it was with the stiff-necked Jews? Moses and the prophets ceased not to teach them out of the law what they should do, but they would not hearken nor obey; now the ministers of Christ Jesus, and dispensers of holy mysteries, teach us out of the law and prophets, out of the holy word of life, what we should do, but who doth hear or obey? If we should seek one by one to find the count, should we find one man of a thousand that followeth after perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and obedience to his will, or that hungereth in his soul to grow from grace to grace till he be fulfilled with knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding? We grow indeed, and we grow to perfection, but thus: we grow from bad to worse, and we come to perfection in sin and wickedness; men never more skilful to deceive, to oppress, to circumvent one another, and under the hypocritical show of holiness to practise all kind of wickedness; he that was unjust is unjust still, and he that was filthy is filthy still; he that stole stealeth more; he that gave his money upon usury giveth more; yea, he that went up with us unto the house of God he will go up no more; he that feared an oath will now swear lustily; and he that seemed to make some conscience of his ways is now quite turned out of the way. So that our growing is from bad to worse, and which is worse, from better to worse. Insomuch that the Lord may seem to have dealt with us as he dealt with those of whom the apostle writeth to the Romans, chap. i. 28; as we have not regarded to know God, so he hath delivered us unto a reprobate mind. We have despised the riches of his bountifulness, and patience, and longsuffering, 'not knowing that the bountifulness of God leadeth us to repentance, and therefore he hath given us up to the hardness of our heart, that, after our heart which cannot repent, we might heap unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the just judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 4, 5. Or, if there be any of us that go not thus backward as we have said, yet how many of us is there that goeth forward, and increaseth with the increase of God? It may be that some of us

think we have some knowledge of Christ, that we walk in some obedience unto his will, that we are not unjust, adulterers, swearers, extortioners, as others, and that we are before many of our brethren for many good graces; but do we not even sit us down and content ourselves with that we have, and never seek for more? Or, if we ask with the young man in the gospel, Mat. xix. 20, 'What lack I yet?' is it not as he did, thinking that all is well, we need no more? Why else is it that we will not come unto the house of God to hear his word? The cry is incessantly taken up, Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters'; and ye that have no silver, come, buy, and eat.' But we will not hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. We know Christ well enough, or else we would be sorry. Again, why else is it that we come no faster forward in the practice of denying ungodliness and worldly lust, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world? We hear the retreat from sin and wickedness, and the alarm unto holiness and righteousness often sounding in our ears; but we think they are things that do not concern us, we post over such things to such and such men, we would willingly mend if we knew anything amiss, and in the mean time we wish that we may keep ourselves as we are. Thus, if we do not go backward, yet we do not go forward. But let us know, that not to increase in the knowledge of Christ is to decrease, and not to go forward in the way of godliness is to go backward. Yea, whatsoever conceit we have of our knowledge, and of our obedience, we are far from either if we do not desire and long in our very souls to increase and grow forward in either. If we know Christ, our hearts will be inflamed daily more and more to increase in the knowledge of Christ; and if we have begun truly to obey Christ, we will go forward and make an end of our salvation with fear and trembling; for hereby we know that we know Christ, and walk in his fear, if we feel in ourselves a longing desire to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus.

So many of us, therefore, as desire to have this testimony unto our own souls, that we know Christ in some measure, and that we are truly partakers of the grace of Christ, let us follow after perfection, and let us grow from grace to grace, and from knowledge to knowledge, till we come unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ. Let us neither quench the Spirit to go backward, nor be weary of well-doing to stand at a stay; but let us labour to increase in every good grace of God with the increasing of God. As we grow in years, so let us labour to grow in grace, and as we grow in other knowledge, so let us strive to grow in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. If we follow after perfection, though it be in great imperfection, it is the work of God, and accepted with God; and if the consideration of our imperfections set us unto God by earnest prayer unto him that he will perfect his

praise in our weakness, and increase the graces of his Holy Spirit in us, it is a sure token unto us of our spiritual growth in Christ Jesus. Whatsoever, therefore, our imperfection be, let not that trouble us. If we have not already attained unto it, or be already perfect, let us with our apostle follow if we may comprehend it, even as we are comprehended of Christ Jesus ; and as the apostle Peter, in the end of his latter epistle, chap. iii. 18, exhorteth them unto whom he wrote, ‘ Let us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus.’ It followeth,

Brethren, I count. That which followeth in these two next verses is in substance the very same with that in the former verse, amplified by a continual allegory taken from the manner of them that run in a race, but consisting of the same members, to wit, an acknowledgment of his own imperfection in the knowledge of Christ, and a signification of his eager pursuit after perfection. The former member here is in substance the same with the former member of the former verse ; only a loving compellation of them by the name of brethren is here added, ‘ Brethren, I count not ;’ and the manner of speech is somewhat here altered, in that he saith, ‘ I count not myself that I have attained to it.’

In that he calleth them brethren, I note the apostle’s kind dealings with the Philippians, to win them from that error wherewith they were somewhat entangled, though not bewitched and seduced, by the false teachers. Whence I observe a necessary duty of a good minister, which is to win them that are falling into any error from their error by the spirit of meekness : ‘ Brethren,’ saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 1, ‘ If any man be fallen by occasion into any fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one with the spirit of meekness.’ The same course is to be taken with them that are falling into any error ; they are not to be soothed up or flattered in their error, but they are to be reclaimed with all kindness and mildness. As, therefore, is the man and his fault, so is he to be dealt withal : ‘ A reproof entereth more into him that hath understanding than an hundred stripes into a fool,’ Prov. xvii. 10 ; God’s children, therefore, are gently to be dealt withal, ‘ but a rod belongeth to the fool’s back,’ chap. xxvi. 3. Some wounds must have wine, some oil, some wine and oil poured into them ; and therefore the apostle had learned sometime to come with a rod and sometimes in the spirit of meekness ; sometimes beseeching by the tender mercies of God, and sometimes delivering unto Satan ; sometimes with ‘ beloved brethren ’

and sometimes with ‘ foolish Galatians.’ Let not, therefore, this or the like places deceive any to think that God is only in the soft and still voice of *brethren* ; but let every minister of Christ learn when to reprove sharply, and when to deal more mildly ; and as he seeth it expedient, let him come with a rod, or in the spirit of meekness. But I have had occasion heretofore, and shall hereafter, to speak of this point.

Again, that he saith, ‘ I count not myself,’ &c. I note the apostle’s most wise taxing of the Philippians as having suffered themselves somewhat to be persuaded that they had already attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ, and were now to join unto it the works of the law ; for he doth not say unto them, They among you that count themselves that they have attained to perfection in the knowledge of Christ, they are shamefully deceived ; but, saith he, ‘ I, your apostle, by whom ye were brought to the knowledge and obedience of Christ, I count not myself to have attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ ;’ so gently admonishing them that they that count themselves perfect take heed that they do not deceive themselves ; whence I observe the wisdom that is required in noting of faults, which is, that faults are not always to be noted plainly by their names, but sometimes they are only wisely to be insinuated. When the scholar hath a good opinion of himself, and thinks that he knows all things, the master doth not always repress his arrogance by telling him that he doth not know many things whereof he vainly boasteth, but sometimes he saith unto him, Well, I count not myself that I have attained to the knowledge of all things ; and so by his own example bringeth his scholar to a more modest conceit of himself. Even so the minister of Christ Jesus, labouring to repress such faults as do arise, is not always plainly to direct his speech unto them that offend, and barely to note their faults, but sometimes he is only to propose himself as a pattern whereby they may reform themselves. And herein is great wisdom in the minister required, to know when plainly to note, and when only to insinuate, such faults as are to be reformed. And this wisdom they want that either censure all men and all faults alike, or note them and their faults more sharply, whom and whose faults they should touch with more mildness. And how much this wisdom is wanting might easily be shewed, if I might in this place as fitly speak of it as there is just and great occasion to speak of it ; but, because it doth not much concern you unto whom my speech is wholly directed, I pass it over, and proceed unto the next point.

LECTURE LXII.

Brethren, I count not myself that I have attained to it; but one thing I do, I forget that which is behind, &c.—
PHILIP. III. 13, 14.

NOW, to omit other notes which hence haply might be made, ye see that this of our apostle here is

in substance the very same with the former member of the former verse. ‘ Brethren, I count not,’ &c.

The substance of which speech is an acknowledgment of his want of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection, &c., whereby he might attain to the glorious resurrection of the dead. But why doth the apostle again come unto the same point, why doth he again inculcate his imperfection in the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection? It was no doubt to beat out of the Philippians their conceit of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and to let them see what a matter of moment it was to acknowledge their want of perfection in the knowledge of Christ. So the faithful people of God, to beat out all trust in themselves, and to shew how much they thought it did concern them to do, cry and say, 'Not unto us;' and again, 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give the praise,' Ps. cxv. 1. So the prophet, to beat out that stupidity and blockish carelessness which men have of the goodness and wonderful works of the Lord, and to let them see how much it behoveth them to observe the loving kindness of the Lord, saith, Ps. cvii., 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men!' And again, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord,' &c., and so for several times in that psalm.

Hence then I observe, that the children of God are at no hand to entertain any conceit of any perfection in themselves, either in the knowledge of Christ or in obedience unto his will, but by all means to cast down every such imagination, and meekly to acknowledge their imperfection. It was the fault of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. viii., that they had such a conceit of their perfection in the knowledge of Christ, that presuming thereupon they durst to be present at idolatrous sacrifices, and to eat of things sacrificed unto idols. They, they knew Christ well enough; they knew that there was but one God, and that an idol was nothing; they knew that they had a Christian liberty in things indifferent, and therefore they would use it at all times and in all places. And it was the fault of the pharisees, often reproved in them by our Saviour, that they had such an opinion of their own holiness and righteousness that they despised other, as appeareth by that parable of the pharisee and the publican, Luke xviii. 9. And it is a fault plainly condemned by our Saviour, where he saith, that he came 'not to call the righteous, but the sinners, to repentance,' Mat. ix. 13: where he calleth them righteous that trusted in themselves that they were righteous; them he came not to call; they were whole, they needed not the physician; they were perfect, they needed none to supply their want. And a woe is pronounced unto them that 'are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight,' Isa. v. 21, i.e. that please themselves in their own wisdom, and in their own knowledge, as if they had all knowledge and all understanding. It is not then for the children of God to flatter themselves with any conceit of any perfection

in themselves, either in knowledge, or in holiness and righteousness, or in any such thing. For besides that all such conceit is so condemned, as we have shewed, see the inconvenience which follows it, which makes it to be condemned. For (1) whom it possesseth, it makes them to presume of that which they have above that is meet, so that in confidence thereof they do many things which they should not; which appeareth both by the example of the Corinthians, of whom we speake even now, whom the conceit of their knowledge so puffed up that thereupon they presumed to be present at idolatrous sacrifices, and to eat of things sacrificed unto idols; and it is likewise apparent by the example of all these heretics which at all times have troubled the church. For whence else did spring all their heresies but from this, that they in an opinion of their own knowledge would not submit themselves unto the judgment of the church, but broached such untruths as seemed unto them to be truths? (2.) It makes them that they seek not that which they should have, and that they disdain to be taught, as appeareth plainly by the pharisees. For they, because of that opinion which they had of their own righteousness, never sought the righteousness of Christ; and they disdained to be taught either of Christ or of any others. Insomuch that when he that was born blind shewed plainly by the miracle which Christ had wrought on him that he was God, they said unto him, John ix. 34, 'Thou art altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?' And hereupon it is, I take it, that Solomon saith of such men, Prov. xxvi. 12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.' More hope of a fool than of him! Why? Because the fool will rather be won to hearken unto instruction, and to receive understanding than will he. And therefore we see that when many of the common people came unto Christ, and believed in him; none of the chief rulers or of the pharisees believed in him: John vii. 31, 48, 49, 'Doth any of the rulers or of the pharisees believe in him? but this people which know not the law are cursed.' I doubt not but that many more inconveniences do follow this conceit of perfection in knowledge, or righteousness, or any such thing. But by this which hath been spoken it may appear how unmeet it is for the children of God to grow to any such conceit or opinion of themselves.

This may teach us to cast down every imagination of any such concited perfection, and meekly to acknowledge our wants and imperfections. For this is it that is pleasing and acceptable unto God, as it is written, 1 Peter v. 5, 'God resisteth the proud and highly conceited, and giveth grace to the humble,' that are mean and weak in their own eyes. And this is it which makes the way unto perfection both in knowledge and in righteousness, as it is written, Ps. xxxii. 6, 'I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord; and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.' Lo,

how the acknowledgment of our unrighteousness brings on the cloak of righteousness; and so the begging of wisdom and knowledge, in a feeling of the want of these things, is that which doth obtain wisdom and knowledge, as it is written, James i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and reproacheth no man; and it shall be given him.' Which, albeit it be first and principally meant of, wisdom to endure patiently afflictions, yet may it well be understood of all wisdom and knowledge generally, the want whereof whoso feeleth, and asketh it, he receiveth it; for who is he that receiveth knowledge, and righteousness, and every good thing? He that asketh; for so it is written, Mat. vii. 7, 'Ask, and it shall be given you: for whosoever asketh, receiveth.' First asking, and then receiving; first we must become beggars, and then God giveth. Now who is he that asketh and beggeth, but he that feeleth his wants and imperfections? The whole, as we noted before, never seeks the physician; and he that thinks he hath enough of anything, doth never ask after more. It is the acknowledgment of our wants and imperfections that makes us run to the Lord, and ask, and beg of him that we want; and asking, we receive; acknowledging our wants, he supplies our wants; and, so by opening our imperfections, a way is made for us unto perfection.

I wish we had all of us learned to cast down every imagination of conceited perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and to acknowledge in the spirit of meekness that we have not yet attained unto such perfection, but that we might well in some things submit our judgments unto others. Amongst the prophets and preachers of the word, this were to be wished, that in the practice of this lesson we would be precedents unto others; that we would beat down every high conceit of knowledge in ourselves; that we would submit ourselves, and that we speak, unto the judgment of the prophets; that we would not easily and hastily broach abroad everything that we seem unto ourselves to know; that we would not presume to understand above that is meet to understand; that we would not by our knowledge destroy the faith, or wound the weak conscience of any; and that we would not set on sale, as it were, our knowledge unto the vain curiosity of any itching humour whatsoever. Pity it were that we shold wed ourselves in liking of any opinion whereof it may justly be doubted whether it be sound; that we should count it a disparagement unto us to yield in anything that we have taken a liking unto; that we should strive by our skill and knowledge to defend everything that we have said, because we have said it, and think ourselves able to defend it. If any man's knowledge thus puff him up, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but, as it is written, Rom. i. 22, 'They that profess themselves thus to be wise, they become fools.' Yea, it were to be wished that generally we would snppress this great conceit that

we have of our knowledge of Christ; for what do we say? Knowledge, knowledge, never more knowledge of Christ: we know enough; men never knew more, and never lived worse. But see how we deceive ourselves. Did men never live worse? This is an argument that men never knew less; for 'he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,' 1 John ii. 4. To know Christ is not to be able to talk of Christ, and to have this contemplative and knowing knowledge, whereby we are able to discourse what the Scriptures do witness of him; but to know him is to have such a feeling and sweet experience of him, and his mercies unto us, in our own souls, as that it both works in us all godly comfort, and stirs us up unto all holy obedience. See then, ye that say, never more knowledge, but never worse living. There hath been (I doubt not) as bad living, and as little knowledge as now there is. But see whether any more knowledge now than needs. Our want of obedience argues our want of knowledge. We have not yet attained to perfection in either, but we had need to mend both. And if we will grow in obedience, let us cast away all imagination of knowledge enough, and let us grow daily more and more in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In a word, conceit of perfection in the knowledge of Christ makes us presume too much of that we have, and makes that we seek not that we should have; therefore let us cast down every imagination of any such conceited perfection, and let us meekly acknowledge our wants and imperfections. And let this suffice to be spoken touching this first member, wherein the apostle repeateth his acknowledgment of his want of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection.

But one thing I do, &c. In these words the apostle repeateth the signification of his incessant and earnest following after that perfection which before he said he had not yet attained unto, which was the latter member of the former verse. The manner of speech which here he useth is borrowed from the qualities of them that run in a race. And he remembereh three especial qualities of runners, whereby he maketh proof of his incessant and earnest following after the perfection of the knowledge of Christ. The first is, that they never look back to mark how much ground they have already run; the second is, that they still keep their eyes upon the mark that is before them, and still run towards it; the third is, that they still remember for what prize they run, and therefore so run that they may obtain the prize. In all which qualities the apostle professeth that he matched the best runners in his Christian race; for as runners never look behind them, so he saith that he did not only never look back at the things behind him, but he quite forgot all that was past, so far was he from thinking of any merit for aught that he had done, were it never so good. Again, as runners have always their eye upon the mark before

them, and still run towards it, so he saith that he did endeavour himself unto that which was before, still labouring as if he would every foot stretch out his arms to catch hold of the mark; and that he still followed toward the mark, never intermitting his course, but if he fell, up again, and to it. Lastly, as runners make haste unto the mark for the prize that they may obtain, so he saith that he ceased not running towards the mark for the prize of immortality with Christ in the heavens, by God which had called him in Christ Jesus. So that, ye see, the apostle here signifieth his most eager pursuit without intermission after perfection in the knowledge of Christ, which only he should have in the heavens, when after his race in this life ended, he should reign with him for ever and ever. Now, let us see what we may hence observe for our instruction in our Christian race unto perfection and immortality in the heavens.

And, first, it is not unworthy the noting, that the apostle, passing from the one member unto the other, saith, ‘But one thing I do’; whereby he implieth thus much, that having not yet attained unto perfection, he thought it a very necessary thing for him to follow after it with all diligence, and without all intermission. One thing I do, and that one thing I count necessary. What is that? ‘I forget that which is behind,’ &c. To know Christ perfectly, that is my labour, and the prize for which I run. Whence I observe, that there is one thing necessary for all Christians, which is, that acknowledging our want of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, we still run forward from perfection to perfection, till we become perfect men in Christ Jesus. For this we must know, that our whole life is a way and race, wherein we must walk and run from imperfection towards perfection, and that in the whole race of our life it is not for us to look back, or to stand still; but one thing is necessary, even that we still run towards perfection, which is the mark set only at our race’s end. The necessity of this one thing our Saviour shewed when he said unto Martha, Luke x. 41, 42, ‘Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; Mary hath chosen the better part.’ Why, what had Mary chosen? She troubled not herself with other matters, but she sat her down at Jesus’s feet, and heard his preaching, ver. 39. Mary sat down, and Martha ran up and down, being cumbered about much serving; but yet Mary ran in the Christian race, when she sat her down at Jesus’s feet and heard his preaching. She followed after the knowledge of Christ, and of that our Saviour said that one thing was needful.

But how needful this one thing is, not many of us consider. Many Marthas, but not many Marys. Many of us are troubled about many things; we have many irons in the fire, much business to occupy our heads withal, many guests to look unto, a great family to care for; indeed, so much we have to do, that if Jesus be preaching in his minister, we cannot come to hear him.

Not many of us that, with Mary, will leave all our other business if Jesus be preaching in his minister, and come and hear him. For to note this by the way, ye may not imagine that Mary was any idle housewife, or that she sequestered herself wholly from all things of the world, and gave herself only to reading and hearing of the word preached; but this was her commendation, that when Jesus came unto their house, and being come began to preach, she would not lose the opportunity, but straightway left all her other busiess, and sat her down at Jesus’s feet and heard his preaching. And this was the one thing that was needful, that when he was preaching she should come and hear him. Other things she might do at other times, but now she was to do this. But not many of us consider this; for when Jesus comes into our houses almost in his minister’s preaching, so that if we will but come out of our doors to hear him, we may sit down at his feet and hear his preaching, yet we cannot attend it; either we have no leisure, or else we have no list. Some of us look back unto the things of the world; others of us stand, and love to stand in the market all the day idle; others of us think that we have run well, and that we may now well breathe, at least a while; but the smallest some of us run forward, and grow from grace to grace. Well, let us at length, with our apostle, count ourselves that we have not attained to that we should; and this one thing which is needful let us do, let us forget that which is behind.

I forget, &c. Here I note the apostle’s running in his Christian race after that one thing which was needful, wherennto he had not yet attained, and therein the manner how he did run in his Christian race. Like a good runner, he ran and never looked behind him; nay, he forgat that which was behind, he never minded or thought of anything that was behind him, of anything that he had done. Yea, indeed, forgat he all, both the good and the bad things which he had done? David did not so, for he said that his sin was ever before him, Ps. li. 3; yea, and himself often speaks of his persecution of the church, Gal. i. 13. True indeed, and good it is that we should not forget our sins against God; for the remembrance of our sins is both good to humble us and to represent unto us God’s mercies towards us. It was not, then, the sins which he had done which he forgat, but he forgat even all the good things that he had done, lest by taking too great pleasure in the remembrance of them, he should not follow so hard towards the mark as he ought. Yea, but if he forgat all the good things that he had done, how doth he so often remember them in divers his epistles? ‘I have,’ saith he, Rom. xv. 17, ‘whereof I may rejoice in Christ Jesus in those things which pertain to God.’ And then he speaks of the obedience of the Gentiles by his ministry, and of his diligence in preaching where Christ had not been named, &c. And again, 1 Cor. xv. 10, ‘His grace, saith he, ‘in me was not in vain, but I laboured more

abundantly than they all.' And in his latter epistle he shewed himself so little forgetful of them, that he makes a large bead-roll of such things as he had suffered for Christ his sake, 2 Cor. xi. True indeed he forgot them not, when the remembrance of them did make for the glory of Christ Jesus, or the necessary defence of his ministry and apostleship ; but he forgat them in respect of any such use as the false teachers taught to make of such things. He was not proud of them, he challenged no perfection by them, he reposed no confidence in them, he did not think of any merit by them, but in these respects he quite forgat them, lest by such remembrance of them he should be hindered in the race that he was running. Thus then ye see how the apostle, running in his race, did forget that which was behind.

And hence I observe, that in the Christian race which we are to run, we are not to look back on the pleasures of the flesh, or the things of the world, or any good that we have done, to repose any confidence therein, but we are quite to forget everything which any way may hinder us in our race towards the mark that is set before us. For as our Saviour saith, Luke ix. 62, 'No man that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is apt to the kingdom of God.' Remember Lot's wife: 'She turned back, and was turned into a pillar of salt,' Gen. xix. 26. Remember the children of Israel ; they turned back in their hearts after the flesh-pots of Egypt, and they were overthrown in the wilderness, Num. xi. 'Are ye so foolish,' saith the apostle to the Galatians, chap. iii. 3, 'that after ye have begun in the Spirit, ye would now be made perfect by the flesh ?' It had been better, saith Peter, 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 'not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it, to turn away from the holy commandment.' The reason is given by the same apostle : 'For if, after we have escaped from the filthiness of the world through the knowledge of the Lord, and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, we be yet again tangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning.' Being, then, in the race of the Spirit, we may not look back unto the flesh ; and having tasted of the good word of God, we may not turn away from the holy commandment, lest a worse thing come unto us. Now, then, will ye know who they are that look back, and turn aside out of the right way wherein they should walk ? Surely all they that set their affections on the things which are on the earth, and not on the things which are above ; for having given our names unto God in our baptism, we have renounced the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, the things of the world, the devil, and all his works. If, then, we shall suffer ourselves to be snared with any of these, we look back ; yea, if we love father or mother, if we love wife or children more than Christ, we look back ; yea, if we repose any confidence in any good that we have done, or in

any cross that we have suffered, we look back, we do not forget that which is behind ; for so saith our Saviour, Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.' Not worthy of him ? Why ? Because, when he should look forward unto Christ, he looks back unto these. And the apostle saith, Rom. ix. 32, that 'Israel attained not unto the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ;' that is, because they looked not straight forward with the eyes of faith unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, but looked back upon the merits of their works, to be made righteous thereby. They reposed the confidence of their righteousness in the works of the law, and therein looked back unto the law, when they should have looked forward by faith unto Christ. So that if we repose any confidence in our works, like ill runners we look back.

What shall we say, then, unto those meritmongers, that look to gain heaven by the merit of their works ? They take pleasure in such works as they have done ; they are as much in love with them as ever Samson was with Delilah, Judges xvi. ; they lay their life in the lap of their works, and rejoice in them as in the crown of their life. Judge, then, how they run in the Christian race, whether they have forgotten all behind them, whether they look not back unto that which is behid. You will easily judge, and ye will easily see, that because they sleep on the knees of their works, as of their Delilah, and lay their life in the lap of their works, they are very like to be betrayed into the hands of their cruel enemies, the devil and his angels, and to have far less comfort of their life than ever bad Samson.

What shall we say likewise unto those that, with Demas, embrace this present world, and incline their hearts unto covetousness, which is idolatry ? Unto those that live at ease in Zion, and eat, and drink, and fill themselves with pleasures, stretching themselves upon their beds, rising up to play, singing to the sound of the viol, inventing to themselves instruments of music, and in a word so living as if they thought that either now they must take their pleasure, or else they must never have it ? Are not all these bad runners ? Have these forgotten that which is behind ? Do they not look back ? The point is easily answered, it is a clear case. Yea, many bad runners there are in the Christian race, even so many as there are lookers back unto honour, wealth, pleasure, profit, ease, favour, and whatsoever the world esteemeth of. As for us, men and brethren, let us so run that we may obtain ; and therefore let us cast away everything that presseth down, and the sin that hangeth so fast on ; let us abandon everything which may hinder us in our race ; let us not look back unto honours, riches, pleasures, profits, or the like ; which may cause us either to turn back, or to stand still, but let us with the apostle forget that which is behind, and endeavour ourselves unto that which is before.

LECTURE LXIII.

And endeavour myself unto that which is before, and follow hard toward the mark for the prize of the high calling,
&c.—PHILIP. III. 14.

THERE are also two other notable qualities of runners, whereby the apostle makes proof of his incessant running in his Christian race. The former is, that good runners keep their eyes still upon the mark before them, and run hard towards it. In this quality, also, the apostle professeth that he matched even the best runners, in the words following, when he saith that he endeavoured himself unto that, &c. : ‘ And I endeavoured myself,’ &c. The word which the apostle here useth (*τοῦς ἐμπρόστιν ἀπετείνομενος*), when he saith that he endeavoured himself, signifieth that as good runners, when they have come near unto the mark, stretch out their head, and hands, and whole body to take hold of them that run with them, or of the mark that is before them, so he in his whole race so laboured unto that which was before, as if he were still stretching out his arms to take hold of it. The word likewise which he useth in the next phrase of speech (*διώζω*) where he saith that he followed hard toward the mark, signifieth that he followed as one that would not leave till he had that which he followed, but if he fell he would up again and to it, and not give over, no more than the persecutor doth, till he have him whom he persecuteth. That which is before whereunto he endeavoureth himself, that which is the mark toward which he follows, is Christ Jesus, the excellent and perfect knowledge of whom is such that he calls him his mark ; that is, that whereon his eyes were wholly and only set in the whole course of his Christian race. As therefore the apostle before professed that in his Christian race he never looked back, but forgot that which was behind, so now he professeth that still he ran forward, so labouring in his whole race unto that which was before, as if he were still stretching out his body to take hold of it, and so following as one that would never give over, but if he fell, would up and to it again, still pressing towards the mark, Christ Jesus, on whom, as on his mark, his eyes were wholly and only set in the whole course of his Christian race.

Whence I observe, that in the Christian race which we are to run, we are not to stand still or to give over, but with all eagerness, and all perseverance, still to press towards the mark that is set before us at our race’s end. For who is he that obtaineth the crown, but he that striveth lawfully, bearing all brunts, and running through all difficulties without shrinking ? As it is written, 2 Tim. ii. 5, ‘ No man is crowned except he strive as he ought to do,’ fighting a good fight, and finishing his course. And who is he that shall be saved, but he that holdeth out a constant course unto the end ? As it is written, Mat. x. 22,

‘ He that endureth unto the end, he shall be saved.’ And again, Rev. ii. 26, 27, ‘ He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken.’ And in whom doth God dwell as in his holy house, but in them that keep fast the profession of their hope unto the end ? As it is written, Heb. iii. 6, ‘ We are God’s house, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of our hope unto the end.’ And hereupon are those often exhortations in holy Scripture : 2 Tim. iii. 14, ‘ Continue thou in the things that thou hast learned, and art persuaded thereof,’ &c. ; and again, 1 Peter i. 17, ‘ Pass the time of your dwelling here in fear.’ He doth not measure the account of our obedience unto God by days, or months, or years; but ‘ pass,’ saith he, ‘ the time of your dwelling here,’ even the whole race of your life, ‘ with fear,’ making an end of your salvation with fear and trembling. And again, the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. iii. 12, 14, ‘ Take heed, brethren, lest at any time there be in any of you an evil heart, and unfaithful, to depart away from the living God. For,’ saith he, ‘ we are made partakers of Christ, if we keep sure unto the end the beginning wherewith we are upholden.’ Yea, the apostles, Acts xiii. 43, xi. 23, never ceased to exhort all to ‘ continue in the grace of God,’ and ‘ with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord.’ If, then, we will hearken unto the exhortation of the Holy Ghost, if we will obtain the crown and be saved, we may not faint or give over in our Christian race, but we must hold out unto the end. To enter the lists of this race, and to begin well, is somewhat, but to small purpose, unless by continuance in well-doing we do approve our running. Judas may serve for example, whom it little profited that he had run well, because afterwards he went astray from that ministration and apostleship which he had obtained with the rest of the apostles, and purchased unto himself a field with the reward of iniquity. For, as the prophet saith, Ezek. xviii. 24, so is it most true, ‘ If the righteous man shall forsake his righteousness, the Lord will also forget the righteousness that he hath done ;’ and the cause is most just why our sins should be imputed unto us, if at any time we should faint and fall in the way. Having then begun well, and in the spirit, our care must be to continue our course, not standing still like unto those idle ones reproved in the gospel, Mat. xx. 6, or giving over to run, but still following hard towards the mark. It may be, that, running, we may stumble and fall, as Peter did when he denied his Master,

Mat. xxvi.; as Paul did, when a ‘prick was given him in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him,’ 2 Cor. xii. 7; and as all the disciples did, when they forsook Christ and fled, Mat. xxvi. 56. But what must we do? We must up again and to it; we must break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by mercifulness. Yea, if with the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 5, we have ‘left our first love,’ we must ‘remember from whence we are fallen, and repent, and do the first works.’ We have a saying, that it is no shame to take a fall, but it is a shame to lie still. I canot say that in this Christian race it is no shame to take a fall; for our falls, by sinning against our God, should make us for shame to cover our faces; but when we are fallen into any sin, to lie still and sleep in sin, and to give over running in our Christian race, this will turn to our utter shame and confusion. If, therefore, in running we fall, yet must we up again, and run as if our strength were renewed by our fall. We may not be weary of well-doing, but by continuance in well-doing, we must run on the race that is set before us, ‘knowing that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,’ Gal. vi. 9. Add unto that reason which hath been mentioned, that only perseverance unto the end hath the promise of the crown of righteousness and salvation; this also, that God measureth not his gifts unto us by months or years, but his mercy and his love towards us endure for ever. If he, then, be a loving Lord unto us, who will not change his favour towards us for ever, we may not serve him by count of days, but to the last hour we must be faithful. A perfect God must have a perfect servant, an everlasting God a perpetual servant; and if we fall at the last, we are fallen from him, and not he from us, and our condemnation is of ourselves.

This, then, should teach us to shake off all such impediments as either clog us that we cannot run, or cause us to break off when we should continue running. Those that weep through adversity should be as though they wept not; those that rejoice through prosperity, should be as though they rejoiced not; those that have wives, as though they had none; those that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not. Poverty nor riches, honour nor dishonour, evil report nor good report, should take such hold of us as that they should stay us from running that race that is set before us, but through all these we should run as if there were no such burden upon us. He that is to run in a race will not gird on him his armour, but rather he will strip himself, and turn himself almost naked. Even so we in our Christian race should either strip ourselves, as it were, and utterly shake off all such things as ordinarily are impediments in this race, or they should be as if they were shaken off, no troublers of us in our race.

But how far otherwise is it with us! Everything almost makes us sit down and quite give over running.

If riches increase, we sit us down and set our hearts upon them, and there is an end of our race; if poverty do befall us, we sit us down, and either murmur and repine against the Lord, or else fall to robbing and stealing, and such other unlawful means, to relieve our state, and there is an end of our race. If honour, and authority, and credit amongst men grow upon us, we sit us down, and devise with ourselves how we may best maintain our state, our place, our calling, and our credit, and there is an end of our race. If we be disgraced, or suffer any kind of wrong, we sit us down, and bethink ourselves how we may be revenged of him that hath done us this wrong, or this dishonour, and there is an end of our race. If by the mercy of God, through painful study, we have attained to some knowledge, we sit us down, and consider what reward we may justly look for our learning, and we seek, and labour, and post after that, and there is an end of our race. Thus everything almost makes us sit down and quite give over running. But, men and brethren, let there be in us the same mind that was in our apostle. Let us endeavour unto that which is before, and let us follow hard toward the mark. If we continue in the word of the Lord, and walk in his ways, we are Christ his disciples, John viii. 31. Let us therefore continue in the grace of God, and with purpose of heart cleave steadfastly unto the Lord. The ambitious man, he doth not so much think of his present honour, as his mind runs upon a *plus ultra*; he looks still forward, and gladly he would be higher. The covetous man likewise, he doth not so much think what riches he hath, as his mind runs upon more, more, and still he looks forward after more and more. Shall they still look forward towards these vain and transitory things, and so thirst after them, that the more of them they have, the more they run after them; and shall not we much more look forward towards the mark that is set before us in our Christian race, and the nearer that we come to it, run the faster unto it? Let the children of light learn this wisdom of the children of this generation, to follow hard towards the mark that is set before them. Let us so run that we may obtain, and let us never be weary of well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Blessed is he that continueth unto the end, for he shall be saved.

The second thing which hence I observe is, what mark we must propose unto ourselves in running our Christian race; unto which we must endeavour, towards which we must follow, and which we must always have in our eyes: and that is Christ Jesus; that we may perfectly know him, whom to know is life everlasting. On Christ Jesus must our eyes always be set, and on the perfect knowledge of him must our desires be settled. For he is ‘the way, the truth, and the life,’ John xiv. 6; the way, therefore we must begin in him, continue in him, and end in him, walking by him unto him; he is the truth, we

must still therefore look towards him if we will not be deceived ; he is the life, we must therefore run unto him if we will not sleep in death. He is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the ending, in regard both of the being, and of the power, and of the actions, and of the dispositions of all creatures ; so that as of him, and through him, and for him, are all things, so unto him and his glory are all things to be referred. And see what great reason there is to move us to look still towards him as the mark toward which we are to follow as hard as we can. For doth not he still look towards us, and call upon us, crying, and saying, Mat. xi. 28, ‘Come unto me, all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you’? Doth he not stand still stretching out his arms, as always most ready to receive us if we will come unto him ? Nay, doth he not oftentimes, when we are turning out of the right way wherein we should walk, hook us in again with his rod and his staff, and lead us, as it were, by the hand unto himself ? Yea, such is the loving-kindness of our sweet Saviour, that he will have us to run after him, and he will draw us, that we may run after him ; that he will have us to follow hard towards him as our mark, and he will guide us in our way which leadeth unto him ; that he will have us to make speed to come unto him, and he will enlarge our hearts, that we may run the way of his commandments, and so come unto him. Such is the mark set at the end of our Christian race ; not a dead mark, which helpeth the runner nothing in his race, but drawing us unto himself, that where he is, there we may be also. This was the mark that the apostle ran at, and this is the mark that we should run at, to know him perfectly, and the virtue of his resurrection, &c., whereby we might attain to the resurrection, &c.

Here, then, we learn why it is that so few run as they ought in the Christian race. The most part of men have another mark that they run at. Some run at riches, some at honours, some at pleasures, some at ease, some at skill and knowledge in the things that are done under the sun, and on these things are their eyes set, and their minds wholly bent. But the least some make Christ Jesus the mark whereat they run ; to know him is the thing whereon the fewest minds are bent ; he is farthest out of sight, and farthest out of mind with the most men. Not running, then, at the right mark, how can we but run amiss ? Beloved, ye see what the mark is whereat we should aim in the whole course of our life. Let the children of this world prick at their several marks as they list, but let us follow hard towards the mark Christ Jesus. He is that mark, whereat, if we be Christians, we should aim in our whole race. Let our eyes be still set, and our minds always bent upon him. If we walk towards him, he will direct our goings in his paths, even for his own name’s sake. A better mark we cannot have, and another mark we ought not to have. There is no running, if we run as we ought, but to

him ; neither any running to him, but by him. Let us therefore by him run unto him, and in all things let us still look unto him. The race is well run, when at the race’s end we come to such a mark ; and well may we run through cold and nakedness, through stripes and imprisonments, and all kind of difficulties, to come to such a mark ; whereunto we can no sooner come, but straight we have the prize for which we run, even glory and immortality in the highest heavens. Let us therefore so run that we may obtain, let us run till we come unto the mark, that we may obtain the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And let this suffice to be spoken touching the second quality of runners.

The third quality of runners, whereby the apostle makes proof of his incessant running in his Christian race, is this, that runners, keeping in mind the price for which they run, make haste unto the mark for the price that they may obtain. In this also the apostle professeth that he matched even the best runners, in the last words when he saith, that he ‘followed hard toward the mark for the price of,’ &c. In which words by the price is signified that inheritance immortal and undefiled which is reserved in heaven for us ; and it is called the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, because it is the glory of God’s children, whereunto God from on high hath called us in Christ Jesus. As therefore the apostle before professed that he ran and looked not back to that which was behind, and that he ran and gave not over to follow that whereon his eyes were always set, so now he professeth that he ran, and hastened his running, for to obtain the price of glory and immortality in the heavens, whereunto he was called by God in Christ Jesus : all sufficient proofs that the apostle came* apace, as he that desired to obtain.

Hence then I observe, that life everlasting, and glory in the heavens, is the price and reward of our holy and constant running in our Christian race ; which our Saviour signifieth, when, unto them that endure hatred, persecution, and contumelies for his sake, he saith, Mat. v. 12, ‘Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven.’ Our apostle likewise sheweth the same, where he saith, Rom. ii. 6, 7, that ‘God will reward every man according to his works ; to them which, by continuance in well-doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.’ And to the Colossians also, chap. iii. 23, 24, where speaking unto servants he saith, ‘Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.’ All which places, and many other which might be produced to the like purpose, do plainly shew, that eternal life is the reward of our holy walking with God, in such good works as he hath ordained that we should walk in them. A notable price to run for, and a notable encouragement unto the runner. For can we run for

* Qu. ‘ran’?—ED.

a better price than for eternal life in the heavens ? Or can a better reward for our encouragement in our Christian race be given us, than eternal life in the heavens ? How should not this make us to provoke one another unto love and good works ? How should not this make us run the race of a holy life, breaking through all impediments, and not intermitting our course unto the end ?

But here we must know, that though we run for this prize, yet this prize is not given us for the merit of our running ; and though this prize be the reward of our running, yet do we not merit this reward for our running. ‘For it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy,’ Rom. ix. 16. The Lord in mercy hath set down this prize of our running, and in the like mercy gives it unto him that runs out unto the mark, but not for the merit of his running. This one place at this time may serve for a full proof of this point. The apostle ran for the prize, but it was for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He doth not say for the prize that was due unto him, albeit it was due unto him, though not for his merit’s sake, yet for the promise’ sake made in mercy ; but he ran for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Which in that it was the prize of the high calling of God, it is plain that it is given in mercy by him that hath called us in mercy, and likewise in that it is the prize, &c., in Christ Jesus, it is plain that it is given in mercy through Christ Jesus, in whom only we are called unto glory and life everlasting. It is ordained, then, that we should run for this prize, for no man obtaineth it but he that runneth for it, and therefore the apostle ran for it ; but it is the prize of our high calling to be the sons of God, given us in mercy by God, that hath called us in mercy, and given us in Christ Jesus by God, that hath called us in Christ Jesus to be partakers of his glory.

Here, then, behold and wonder at the loving-kindness of our God. We must run, and we shall be very well rewarded. For if we run, albeit we can merit nothing by our running, because when we have done what we can, we are but unprofitable servants, yet in mercy will he give us an everlasting crown of glory, a good reward for a mean service, performed but meanly by him that runs the best, and therefore the greater the goodness of our God, who giveth such reward in mercy, where there wanteth all merit. The mercy of our God should stir up our thankfulness unto our God, and the great reward which in mercy he doth give, should make us run the way of his commandments. All that ever we can do or suffer is not worthy of that glory which shall be shewed unto us, Rom.

viii. 18. Yet if we suffer willingly for Christ his sake, and do the works of our calling, he will in mercy give unto us an incorruptible crown of glory. Let our mouths therefore be filled with his praise and honour all the day long, who, where there wanteth merit, sheweth such mercy. And if duty or love cannot prevail with us, yet let this inestimable reward persuade us to run the way of his commandments. In a word, we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. Let us therefore abound in every good work, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

The next and last thing which hence I observe is, that as God hath chosen us in Christ Jesus, so hath he called us in Christ Jesus. The former appeareth by the epistle to the Ephesians, chap. i. 4, the latter by this place of our apostle, and many others. Yea, Christ Jesus alone it is, in whom, and for whom, God hath ‘blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things,’ ver. 3, as the apostle both speaketh there, and manifestly sheweth both there and elsewhere ; for in him are we predestinate, in him are we chosen, in him are we called, in him are we adopted, in him are we justified, in him are we sanctified, and in him through hope are we glorified, and in him are all the promises made unto us, both of the life present, and of that that is to come. If we had been called in Peter, or in Paul, or in Moses, then might we have believed in them, and looked unto them as unto the mark that is set before us ; but now that we are called in Christ Jesus, we are to believe in him, and always to look towards him in the whole course of our life. In him we have all things, and in him shall our joy be made perfect.

Let this, then, teach us to rejoice only in Christ Jesus, in whom only we are called, and in whom only we are blessed. In ourselves we are nothing else but bondslaves of Satan ; children of wrath ; a naughty and crooked nation ; unable altogether to think, or speak, or do anything that is good ; abominable, disobedient, unto every good work reprobate ; and not only near unto cursing, but cursed. But in our Christ Jesus we are freed from sin and condemnation, and made the servants of righteousness and heirs of salvation ; and in him we are called unto that high calling to be the sons of God, and have all the privileges that belong unto the sons of God. Let us, therefore, rejoice in him alway ; let our songs be made ever of him, and daily let us praise him. Let us judge whatsoever is best to be but dung for the excellent knowledge’ sake of him, and let us in all things grow up in him, &c.

LECTURE LXIV.

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal, &c.—PHILIPPIANS III. 15, 16.

NOW the apostle having thus in particular told the Philippians what he thought of Christ, and likewise of all things without Christ, he goeth from the particular unto the general, and exhorteth that this truth which he hath professed may be generally received and approved; and if any of them will not haply presently receive this truth, yet he signifieth his hope that God will afterwards reveal it to them, that they may embrace it with him; and in the meantime, till God reveal it and make it known unto them, he exhorteth that such grounds of the truth as already they had might with one accord be received and maintained. This I take to be the general meaning of these words in these two verses. Now let us yet a little more particularly sift and examine the meaning of them.

Let us, saith the apostle, &c. This speech, ye see, is exhortative, in that he saith, ‘let us be thus minded;’ and ye see likewise that the exhortation is made by way of conclusion from the particular example of the apostle unto the Philippians in general, in that he saith, ‘Let us therefore, as many as be perfect;’ and ye see that it is to bring over his own private example unto a general doctrine in that he saith, ‘Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.’ Let us therefore; therefore, why? Even because I your apostle, by whom ye have believed, am thus minded, as I have told you, ‘Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.’ Thus minded? How? To renounce all confidence in the flesh; to judge all our own righteousness by works whatsoever to be but dung; to rejoice only in Christ Jesus, and his righteousness, which is through faith; to thirst after the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection; and acknowledging our want of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, incessantly to run forward in the Christian race unto perfection, forgetting that which is behind, and endeavouring ourselves unto that which is before, and following hard towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, let us be thus minded, even as many of us as be perfect. Yea, but who were those? Were there any such? Did not the apostle immediately before deny that he was perfect? How, then, doth he now say, ‘Let us, as many as be perfect?’ &c. We must understand that the apostle doth not here speak of any that were perfect, indeed, either in knowledge or in obedience, but he speaketh partly unto those that thought they were perfect, and partly unto those that by their holy walking shewed that they were in the way to perfection; that both they that thought themselves perfect, and they likewise that by their holy walking shewed plainly that they were in a better

way to perfection than others, would think as he did touching the points before mentioned, and controvrsed betwixt him and the false teachers.

Yea, but is not his exhortation generally unto all? Why, then, doth he require it of them that be perfect? His exhortation is indeed general unto all, that all would think as he did touching the points mentioned afore, from ver. 3 to this 15; but lest auy man should think that he spake especially unto the vulgar sort of men, and prescribed this rule only unto those that were babes in Christ, therefore he sheweth precisely that this is a rule which whosoever among them thought himself to be, or were more perfect than others, ought to keep, even to be so minded as Paul was in the things mentioned above. And, besides, it was not so needful to speak unto them by name, as it were, that knew and acknowledged their own wants, that they should not think themselves perfect, as to them that either thought themselves, or were thought of others, to be perfect. Unto them principally, as by name, the admonition was most needful, that they should be so minded as Paul was, as in the rest of the points, so in the acknowledgment of their own imperfection, and in the pursuit after perfection. It followeth,—

And if ye be otherwise minded, &c. This sheweth that the apostle thought, or rather knew, that he should not be able to persuade all to be of the same mind with him in the things mentioned; but that some, through the suggestions of the false teachers, would think otherwise than he thought of those points. Yet see how kindly he dealeth with those: ‘If,’ saith he, ‘ye be otherwise minded,’ so that ye do not yet think as I your apostle do of these points, even of Christian perfection, but rather are of another judgment, yet I doubt not but as God hath begun to reveal his Son Jesus Christ unto you by my preaching, so he will also, in his good time, reveal and make known unto you this same thing wherein ye now dissent in judgment from me, and will not suffer you to be holden of this error; he will, I doubt not, in his good time, by the ministry of his servants, through the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, open the dim eys of your dark understanding, that ye may see both that ye err in this wherein ye dissent from me, and that this is the truth whereunto I now exhort^{re}you. To gather, then, the sum of the apostle’s meaning in these words, it is as much as if the apostle had thus said: I am thus minded, as I have told you, touching mine own righteousness which is by works, touching the righteousness of Christ which is through faith, and touching Christian perfection in general. Let us, therefore, even all of us, not only those which are but

babes in Christ, or of the vulgar sort, but even as many as either think ourselves, or are thought by others to be perfect, be thus minded as I am touching these points ; and if any of you dissent in judgment from me, and do not think as I do touching Christian perfection, God will, no doubt, in his good time, by the ministry of his servants, through the powerful working of the Holy Ghost, open the dim eyes of your dark understanding, that ye may see both your own error in dissenting from me, and the truth of that whereunto I exhort you ; which being the apostle's meaning, as I take it, in this verse, now let us see what observation we may gather hence for our use and instruction.

1. Therefore, in the apostle's exhortation, when he saith, ' Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded,' I note that as many as follow after Christian perfection are to be so minded, touching works and touching Christ, as the apostle was ; inasmuch as they are not perfect that think themselves already perfect, either in the knowledge of Christ, or in holy obedience ; but they rather, that, acknowledging that they have not yet attained unto perfection, do renounce all things without Christ, rejoice only in Christ, and feeling a sense of the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection in themselves, labour daily more and more to grow with all spiritual growth therein, in certain hope of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Hence, then, I observe what Christian perfection is, namely, a gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby we renounce the flesh, rejoice in Christ, and have such a sense of the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtue of his resurrection in ourselves, that, acknowledging our want of perfection therein, we labour to grow and increase daily more and more therein, and so incessantly run after perfection in them, that as good runners we ' forget that which is behind, and endeavour ourselves to that which is before, and follow hard towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So that unto Christian perfection there are four things necessarily requisite. The first whereof is, justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us through faith without works. For so only are we perfect, if we be found in Christ Jesus, not having our own righteousness which is by works, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness of God through faith. And therefore the apostle telleth the Colossians, in the next epistle, that he and Timothy preached and taught every man in all wisdom, that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, Col. i. 28. And in the next chapter he telleth them that they are complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily, chap. ii. 10. Both which places plainly shew that we are perfect ; but how ? Not in ourselves, but in Christ Jesus. And in him only are we perfect, because only, being in him, not our sins, but Christ his righteousness is imputed unto us, and be-

cause all perfection is originally in him, and is only derived unto us as we are in him. Being, then, in him, our sins and imperfections are hid and covered ; being in him, his righteousness and obedience are imputed and reckoned unto us ; and being in him, that perfection which originally is in him is derived unto us ; and so only are our imperfections covered, his righteousness imputed, and his perfection derived unto us as we are in him. For if any man be not in him, he is ' cast out as a branch and withereth,' John xv. 6. This, then, is necessarily requisite unto Christian perfection, that we be in Christ Jesus, not having our own righteousness by works, but his righteousness by faith. And from this, as from the fountain, do all those other things which are necessary unto Christian perfection issue and spring.

The second thing necessarily requisite unto Christian perfection is, our regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit of God ; for so only are we perfect, if, by the power of the quickening Spirit working on our souls and spirits, we have a feeling knowledge of Christ Jesus in our own souls, and do feel in ourselves a dying unto sin and a living unto righteousness, by the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection. And therefore the Holy Ghost, exhorting us often to be perfect, doth also exhort us to ' cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,' 2 Cor. xiii. 11, and to ' grow up unto full beliness in the fear of God,' chap. vii. 1, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. And why ? No doubt one cause is, because otherwise we cannot be as he exhorteth us to be, perfect. For what perfection can there be, where there is no dying unto sin, which is our bane and imperfection, and no living in holiness and righteousness, which is the only way unto perfection ? Our sins do make a separation between us and our God, Isa. lix. 2, in whom alone we are perfect ; and it is the spirit of sanctification whereby we are engrafted into Christ Jesus, in whom only we are perfect. This, then, is also requisite unto Christian perfection, that we feel in ourselves a mortification of the old man, and a quickening of the new man, through the power of the Spirit, by the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection.

The third thing necessarily requisite unto Christian perfection, is a feeling and acknowledgment of our own imperfection, both in knowledge and in obedience ; for so only do we grow unto Christian perfection, if, in an holy feeling of our wants and imperfections, we pour out our complaints unto our God, and acknowledge our wants unto the Lord. It was the conceit of their perfect knowledge, that made the Corinthians that they knew nothing as they ought to know ; and it was the conceit of their own perfect righteousness, that made the pharisees that they never sought the true perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus. But David having said, 2 Sam. xii. 13, ' I have sinned

against the Lord,' straightway the prophet Nathan said unto him, 'The Lord also hath put away thy sin.' And the publican having smitten his breast, Luke xviii. 14, and said, 'O God, be merciful unto me a sinner,' the Holy Ghost giveth him this testimony, 'that he departed to his house justified rather than the pharisee,' or if we take the sense of the place, he departed home to his house justified, and not the pharisee. And the thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 41-43, having first confessed and said, 'We are indeed righteously here, for we receive things worthy of that we have done,' and afterwards prayed and said, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,' by and by Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' And generally this is true, that only they follow Christ who deny themselves, only they come unto God who feel their wants in themselves, only they seek unto God who are confounded in themselves, and consequently only they come unto Christian perfection whose hearts are touched with the feeling of their imperfections. This, then, is also requisite unto Christian perfection, that in an holy feeling of our own wants, we acknowledge our imperfection in every grace of God.

The fourth thing necessarily requisite unto Christian perfection is, an earnest endeavour and constant care to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; for so only are we perfect in some degree, if we follow hard after perfection, and if, with an inflamed desire after the good things of God, we labour to increase daily more and more in all holiness and righteousness. And therefore the apostle exhorteth saying, Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow hard,' for so the word signifieth (*διώκετε*), 'follow hard after peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' where the apostle doth not limit his exhortation by any circumstance of time, but follow in thy nonage, follow in thy ripe age, follow in thine old age, still follow; for still it is said unto thee, 'Follow hard after peace and holiness.' And why? Even because none overtaketh but he that followeth. And our Saviour, Mat. v. 6, pronounceth a 'blessing' upon the head of them that 'hunger and thirst after righteousness,' which sheweth that where there is this fervent desire to grow up in godliness, and this hungering and thirsting in our souls after the things that belong unto our peace, there is a blessing upon the head of every one that doth so. And why did our apostle follow hard that he might comprehend even as he was comprehended of Christ Jesus, but because they only at length attain unto perfection, who in the mean time follow hard after it? This, then, is also requisite unto Christian perfection, that we labour to grow up in godliness, and to increase in all manner [of] holy conversation. That all these things are necessarily requisite unto Christian perfection, this general exhorta-

tion, inferred by way of conclusion upon the things mentioned in the particular example of our apostle, sheweth most plainly; as also that in these things alone doth Christian perfection consist, unless any man will take upon him more exactly to describe it than the apostle hath done.

Hence, then, we may learn to desery the notable grossness of that monkish perfection whieh our adversaries tell us so much of. For ask our adversaries, or ask a monk, whether he be perfect, he rubs no more at his answer than the young man in the gospel did, Luke xviii. 21, but he, he is perfect, and why should any man ask the question whether he be perfect? And for proof hereof he will tell you, that besides keeping of God's commandments, whereunto we are all bound both by precept and likewise by promise in our baptism, besides this he hath vowed chastity, poverty, obedience, pilgrimage, sufficient badges of his perfection. He meddles not with the things of this life, nay, he cares not for them, nay, he hath forsaken all to follow Christ. The pharisee, that is no extortioneer, no unjust man, no adulterer, that fasts twice in the week, that gives tithe of all that ever he possesseth, is nobody unto him! The young man, that had kept all the commandments from his youth, is nobody unto him! He hath wholly sequestered himself unto contemplation, and given himself unto God, so that the least thing that he doth, even his sitting, his standing, his eating, his sleeping, even the least thing that he doth, is better and more acceptable unto God than the best works either of the first or second table, which the faithful being married do perform. Thus doth he boast of his perfection, as if he were the man, and none but he, that were dear in God's sight, and that were worthy to rest in his holy tabernacle. But how far wide is he of the true and Christian perfection indeed! It is not the righteousness of Christ Jesus that he stands upon, but upon his own righteousness by his own holy and unspotted life. He doth not cast down himself, in any sense and feeling of his own wants and imperfections, but he dares to stand and to shew himself in the presence of the Most High. He doth not daily more and more die unto sin and live unto God, but he is as dead unto sin, and living unto God, as if he were already in the bosom of God. He doth not endeavour to run forward from perfection to perfection, but he hath already attained unto that wherat other men are to run. So that, as it is said of some, Rom. i. 22, that 'when they professed themselves to be wise, they became fools,' so may it be said of these, that when they profess themselves to be perfect, they shew plainly that they are void of all Christian perfection, at least if the apostle's description of Christian perfection may prevail before theirs; for by the apostle's description it is clear that indeed they are not come unto any perfection in the school of Christ, but are quite void of all Christian perfection.

The second use which we may make of the former observation is, that thence we may learn to try what perfection we are grown unto in the school of Christ; for do we rejoice only in Christ Jesus, renouncing all our own righteousness, which is by works, and quietly reposing ourselves in his righteousness through faith in his blood? Do we feel in ourselves a dying unto sin, and a living unto God in righteousness, through the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection, by the power of the Spirit regenerating us unto a lively hope in Christ Jesus? Do we in our souls feel, and from our hearts acknowledge, our regeneration and our sanctification by the contagion of the flesh to be so imperfect, as that we find in ourselves many wants and many imperfections? Do we labour and endeavour to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to be perfect as he is perfect, to be holy as he is holy, and to proceed from strength to strength, until we become perfect men in Christ Jesus? Here is the substance of that perfection which our good God requireth of us in this life. If it be thus with us, we may assure ourselves that we have well profited in the school of Christ, and that we are grown unto very good perfection. There was a time, indeed, when it was said unto us, 'This do, and thou shalt live;' and again, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' and in this time there was no perfection but in the perfect fulfilling of the whole law of God, so that all of us were under the curse, and all of us were in thrall unto that mortal enemy of mankind, the devil, because it was impossible for us to fulfil the law of God. But when it pleased the everlasting King of glory, in infinite mercy towards us, to send his own Son in the similitude of sinful man, for sin to condemn sin in the flesh, then this thrall unto Satan, this curse of the law, this yoke of the law, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, was taken from our shoulders; for that which the law required of us, but which was impossible for us to perform, that Christ Jesus himself fulfilled in our flesh, 'that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,' Rom. viii. 3. And now if by faith we put on Christ Jesus and his righteousness, and by the virtue of his resurrection die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, and acknowledging our own wants and imperfections, do study and endeavour daily more and more to live righteously, and soberly, and godly in this present world, this is the perfection which Christ requireth of us.

A blessed sending of such a Son, and a blessed birth of so sweet a Saviour, worthy to be celebrated by a perpetual remembrance for ever! The sending of him unto us was the greatest token that ever was, of God the Father's love towards us; and his coming into the world in the similitude of sinful flesh, was the joyfulness coming that ever was, so joyful, that an

angel from heaven brought the tidings thereof, and therein of great joy that should be to all people, that a multitude of heavenly soldiers praised God thereat, and said, 'Glory be to God in the high heavens, and peace in earth, and towards men good will;' that certain wise men came then from the east country to worship him; that the shepherds, when they had seen the babe with his mother, published abroad the thing that was told them by the angel of that child; that Simeon, taking him in his arms, praised God and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' &c.; and that Anna spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem, of which most joyful birth we at this time do celebrate a most joyful remembrance, and should so celebrate it even as these holy saints of God did, not in excess of banqueting and feasting, not in immoderate gaming and sporting, not in idleness or wantonness, but in honouring of his name, in singing unto him praise and thanksgiving, and in telling of his salvation from day to day. So did they celebrate his birth, as we have heard, and so should we celebrate the remembrance of his birth. All other celebration is rather an heathenish imitation, than any religious observation. Let us, therefore, as at all other times, so at this time, sound out his praises in the midst of the great congregation, who, having fulfilled that for us in his flesh which we could not, doth now require of us no more than he giveth us; for he requireth of us perfection, and he giveth us perfection, not an absolute perfection, but such as he requireth of us in this life.

To come, then, again unto our point, will we try how we have profited in the school of Christ, and unto what perfection we are grown? Sift the points and see. If we have faith in Christ Jesus, whereby we take hold of his righteousness; if we feel in ourselves the virtue of Christ his death and resurrection by the death of sin, and the life of righteousness; if in heart and voice, through a Christian feeling thereof, we acknowledge our own imperfection; and if thereupon we labour to increase in holiness and righteousness with all godly increasing: then have we well profited in the school of Christ, and then are we grown unto good perfection; for, as I told you before, this is the substance of that perfection which God requireth of us in this life. Howbeit, this withal we must note, that there be degrees in this perfection; for when by God's mercy we are come so far, that the Spirit beareth witness unto our spirit, that in some measure we have attained unto all these points of Christian perfection, yet may we not here stand still, but we must go forward from grace unto grace. Until we come unto the mark at our race's end, we must run forward, and daily grow from perfection to perfection. We must labour daily to increase in faith, that we may daily more and more be established in the righteousness of Christ. We must daily subdue the flesh unto the spirit, that we may

daily more and more be begotten by the Spirit unto a more lively hope in Christ Jesus. We must daily cast down ourselves before the Lord, that he may daily more and more lift us up. We must daily follow hard towards the mark, that we may be daily more and more holy in all manner of conversation; and therefore it is that we do so often communicate at the Lord's table, namely, that our faith and obedience may by degrees be daily more and more strengthened and increased. There needs but once entering into the church by the sacrament of baptism; but being entered into the church, our souls must be often fed and nourished unto everlasting life by the sacrament of the Lord's supper. And faith is at once begotten in us by the ministry of the word, but both our faith and our obedience must be often confirmed and increased, both by the ministry of the word, and by the holy use of the Lord's supper. By an holy institution, therefore, of the Lord, we do often come unto this holy table, that so often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we may so often both renew the remembrance of Christ his blessed death and passion, and so often have our weak faith holpen and strengthened. For as herein we continue the remembrance of that his blessed death and passion until his coming again, so have we hereby a sure pledge and full assurance of our incorporation into the body of Christ Jesus, to be made one with him, and he with us. But before we come unto this holy table, it is necessary, if we will have our faith holpen and strengthened thereby, that we duly and diligently examine ourselves, and in all holy reverence prepare ourselves thereunto. We must prove ourselves, as the apostle willeth, whether we are in the faith, that is, whether we believe that the punishment of our sins is fully discharged in Christ Jesus, and that whatsoever salvation he hath purchased for his children belongeth even to us also; for

this faith we must have before we come hither, our coming hither being not to have this faith wrought in us, but to have this which already we do believe more fully assured unto our souls and consciences. Again, we must try and search in our own souls what contrition and sorrow of heart there is in us for our sins past, what detestation and loathing of sin we find in ourselves, and what purpose and resolution of heart there is in us to forsake our old ways, and in the whole course of our life hereafter to conform ourselves unto God's will set down in his holy word; for unless these things be in us, we are no meet guests for this holy and heavenly table. We must also search and see whether we be in peace and love with all men; for, Mat. v. 23, 24, 'if thou bring thy gift unto the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, there thou must leave thine offering, and go, and first be reconciled unto thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' If, having thus examined ourselves, we come unto this holy table, then here we have sealed unto us our communion with Christ, then here we have assured unto us all the benefits of Christ his death and passion. That, therefore, hereby we may receive all holy increase of our faith, let us with all holy reverence come at this time unto this table; and in the whole course of our life, let us labour by degrees to proceed from perfection to perfection. Let us daily stir up every good grace of God in us, that seeking by continuance in well-doing, honour, and glory, and immortality, we may in the end receive the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And to conclude with this of our apostle, let us, as many as would be perfect, be thus minded as our apostle was touching our justification, touching our regeneration, touching the acknowledgment of our imperfection, and touching an holy pursuit after perfection.

LECTURE LXV.

And if ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal it unto you. Nevertheless, in that whereunto we are come, &c.—
PHILIP. III. 15, 16.

NOW followeth the second point, where the apostle signifieth his hope that God would reveal this truth which he had professed unto them, which as yet were otherwise minded than he was, in these words, 'And if ye be otherwise minded,' &c.

And if ye be otherwise, &c. This sheweth that the apostle thought, or rather knew, that he should not be able to persuade all to be of the same mind with him in the things before mentioned, but that some, through the suggestions of the false teachers that were amongst them, would think otherwise than he thought of those points. Yet see how kindly the apostle dealeth with those: 'If,' saith he, 'ye be otherwise minded,' so that ye do not think as I, your apostle, do of works,

of Christ, of perfection in the knowledge of Christ, but rather are of another judgment, yet I doubt not but, as God hath begun to reveal his Son Jesus Christ unto you by my preaching, so he will also in good time reveal and make known unto you this same thing wherein ye now dissent in judgment from me, and will not suffer you to be holden of this error. He will, I doubt not, by the ministry of his servants, through the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, open the divine* eyes of your dark understanding, that ye may see both that ye err in this wherein ye dissent from me, and that this is the truth whereunto I now exhort you. This I take to be the true mean-

* Qu. 'dim,' as twice before?—ED.

ing of these words. Now let us see what hence we may learn, and so we will proceed unto that which followeth in the next verse.

And if ye be otherwise minded, &c. Ambrose, one of the ancient fathers, readeth these words thus : ‘ And if ye shall be otherwise minded, God also hath revealed it ;’ and understandeth them as if the apostle had thus said, If ye shall think of any more than I have put you in mind of, know that it is by revelation from God. Which sense and reading, if it were true, might indeed help well to bolster out such human traditions and superstitious ceremonies as the chnrech is burdened and pestered withal. But this sense and reading, as well because it may seem to patronage such unwritten verities, and unsavoury ceremonies, as also for that it is altogether different from the words and meaning of the apostle, is utterly to be rejected. For, first, the apostle doth not say, If you shall be, but if ye be otherwise minded. Again, the apostle doth not say, God hath revealed it, but God shall, or will reveal it unto you. And, lastly, when the apostle saith, ‘ If ye be otherwise minded,’ his meaning is not that, if they think more than he hath put them in mind of, but his meaning is, that if they think not as he doth touching the points mentioned, but differ from him in judgment, yet God will also reveal this truth unto them, as he hath done other truths.

My note hence in brief is, that we are to take heed how we take things upon the credit of the ancient fathers. The Lord is greatly to be blessed for them, and it is with all thankfulness to be acknowledged that they by their godly labours have greatly profited God’s church. But yet their words, and the senses which they give of the Scriptures, are to be weighed in the balauce of the sanctuary, and to be examined according to the Scriptures. For this by examination we shall find, that divers times they miss the meaning of the Holy Ghost, and sometimes they plainly alter the words of the Holy Ghost. This place giveth evident witness unto both, where both the words are so altered, and the meaning so missed by this holy father, as that in both he swerveth from the Holy Ghost, as before was evidently shewed. The more to blame they that take a father’s word for warrant good enough, and think their plea good if, in the exposition of a scripture, or debating of a question, they have the suffrage and liking of one or two fathers.

The second thing which I note is, the manner how the apostle dealeth with such of the Philippians as differed from him in judgment, even in these points of righteousness and salvation. He doth not by and by despair of them, or reject them as heretics, or thunder out sharp threatenings against them, but in all mildness of spirit signifieth his hope that God will reveal their error unto them, that they which now are otherwise minded than he is may be of the same mind that he is. But withal we must note what manner [of] men they were with whom the apostle dealt thus kindly.

They were no such men as wilfully opposed themselves against the truth, or such as were so utterly bewitched that they would not obey the truth; but such as, having not long since embraced the truth by his preaching, were now a little seduced, and drawn aside by such false teachers as were crept in amongst them.

Whence I observe, that we are for a time to bear with the ignorance of our weak brethren, and to retain a good hope of them, though they do not wholly subscribe unto that truth which we embrace. This also our apostle teacheth us to do, where he saith, Rom. xv. 1, ‘ We which are strong ought to bear tho infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves ;’ we which are strong in knowledge, in faith, in hope, or any good grace of God, ought to bear with such of our brethren as do yet come short of us in any such grace ; neither ought we so to please ourselves therein as to be puffed up in ourselves, and to contemn others ; but being lowly in our own eyes, we are to hope that God will make their darkness to be light, and supply what wanteth in their weakness. And much to the same purpose is that his exhortation, where he saith, Gal. vi. 1, ‘ Brethren, if a man be fallen by occasion into any fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one with the spirit of meekness ;’ if a man be fallen by occasion of his flesh, of the world, of the devil, or of any instrument of Satan, into any fault either of doctrine or of manners, yo which are spiritual, ye which are more strongly sustained by the Spirit of God, restore such a one with the spirit of meekness, and labour to bring him unto that truth in doctrine, or holiness of life, from which he was fallen. Which sheweth that we are not to give over for forlorn those that are holden with some error, but rather that we are for a time to bear with them, and to hope that the Lord will bring them unto the knowledge of the truth. And see what great reason there is to move us thereunto. Did we not all sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death ? Were we not all ignorant of the ways of God, and of the things that belong unto our peace ? Yes, surely, until the Day-star, even the Sun of righteousness, arose in our hearts, our minds were full of darkness, and the way of truth we knew not. For as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘ the natural man,’ whose understanding is not yet cleared by God’s Spirit, ‘ perceiveth not the things of God, but they are foolishness unto him.’ Hath, then, the Lord in his great mercy towards me made my darkness to be light, and brought me to the knowledge of his truth, and shut him as yet up in darkness and in ignorance ? Or hath the Lord brought us both to the knowledge of his truth, and bath he suffered him by occasion to fall from the way of truth, and sustained me by the strength of his Holy Spirit ? And shall I in either of these cases insult over him, contemn or disdain him, determine or judge rashly of him to be a forlorn man, an atheist, a reprobate ? Or am I not rather, bending the knees of my soul unto the Lord

for his mercies towards me, to hope that in his good time he will lighten his understanding that was shut up in ignorance, or raise him up again that was fallen, and in the mean time to bear with the ignorance of the one and the error of the other? Yes, my brethren, so long as the ignorance of the truth is untainted with cankered malice against the truth, we may hope that the Lord will call them at the sixth, or ninth, or some good hour, and reveal his holy truth unto them, and in the mean time we are to bear with them, and to support one another through love. And for this cause the holy apostles, when the word which they preached was unto them that heard them as water poured upon a stone, yet ceased not to instruct them with all patience, hoping that God would reveal the things unto them which as yet were hid from their eyes.

This, then, should teach us not to despair of them unto whom the Lord hath not yet revealed some part of his truth, nor to withhold from them such wholesome instructions and admonitions as may draw them from that ignorance or error wherewith they are holden, but in all godly sort to labour with them, proving* if at any time God will open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God. The minister is, after the example of our apostle, to instruct with all patience them that be ignorant, and them that be contrarily minded, in that truth of Christ Jesus which he hath learned, and to deal with them to be like-minded as he is: and if they be otherwise minded, yet to labour with them, and to hope that God will reveal the truth unto them. Others likewise whose eyes the Lord hath opened to know things that are spiritually discerned, should labour to draw them on unto the same truth with them; and therefore, besides other duties which they should perform unto them, when they go up unto the house of the Lord, they should say unto them as they in Isaiah, chap. ii. 3, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths;' come, let us go to the church, come neighbour, come friend, let us go to the sermon, and there we shall hear what the Lord will say unto us, and there we shall be instructed in the truth of Christ Jesus. But what do we? We think it well if we come ourselves, and indeed I wish all would do so; but though we know our neighbour ignorant, yet do we not either privately talk with him, or say unto him, Come let us go to sermons; which certainly is a defect in us; for true zeal taketh that of the fire, that the truly zealous man would have all like unto himself; and the more he hath profited in the knowledge of the truth, the more will his heart be inflamed to draw others out of ignorance unto the knowledge of the same truth with him. And what do we know but that God hath ordained us, by this or that holy course, to be the means to bring this or that man unto the knowledge of the truth? Let us not,

* Qu. 'praying'?—ED.

therefore, despair of doing good with our weak and ignorant brother, but let us hope, so long as there is any hope, that the Lord will reveal his truth unto him; and in the mean time let us bear with his ignorance, and labour by all means to bring him to the same mind that is in us touching the truth of Christ Jesus. And this withal let us weigh: is there any of our alliance, or acquaintance, or knowledge, whose eyes the Lord hath so opened that he seeth the truth in divers mysteries of the faith, but yet some things are hid from his eyes? Let this be an encouragement of our hope that the Lord will also reveal these things unto him; for great hope we may conceive, as we see here our apostle likewise doth, that he which hath begun to reveal the truth in divers mysteries of the faith unto them, will also in his good time reveal these things unto them, which as yet are hid from their eyes. Times we may not prescribe unto the Lord, for he calleth not all his children to the knowledge of his Son at one hour, but some at the third, some at the sixth, some at the ninth, some at one, some at another hour, as unto his heavenly wisdom seemeth most meet; and his truth he doth reveal unto his children not all at once, but here a little and there a little, as seemeth best unto him. But yet we may hope that unto such as love not darkness better than light, unto such as do not oppose themselves against the truth, the Lord, that commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, will in his good time shine in their hearts, and reveal his truth unto them so far as shall be necessary for them. Though, therefore, now they do not embrace the same truth altogether with us, yet let us hope that the Lord will also reveal this unto them wherein they now dissent from us; and let us labour with them to that purpose, according to that measure of grace that is given unto us.

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle saith, 'If ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal it;' whereby the apostle sheweth that he could only preach unto them, but it is God that revealeth his truth unto them. If they were otherwise minded than he was, he could not do withal; his office was to teach the truth, he could not open their eyes that they might see the truth, but that must be let alone unto the Lord for ever, who alone revealeth, when he will, that truth wherein we were haply long before instructed. Whence I observe, that in the work of the ministry the ministers of Christ do only dispense the mysteries and seerets of God, but it is God that revealeth them unto us, opening our eyes that we may see the wondrous things of his law. And therefore it is said that when Peter had preached unto Cornelius, and them that were with him, Acts x. 44, 'the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' And again it is said, that when Paul preached near unto Philippi unto certain women that were come together, chap. xvi. 13, 14, 'the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things that Paul spake.' And often,

when the apostles had preached, it is said that the Holy Ghost fell on them that heard, and they believed ; whereby is meant that they preached, but the Holy Ghost revealed, and so their preaching was effectual, as the Holy Ghost wrought with it, in the hearts of them that were ordained unto salvation. And to this agreeth that of the apostle, where he saith, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, ‘I have planted, and Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase ;’ and, ‘neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.’ The ministers, like God’s husbandmen, they sow the seed, even the immortal seed of his word, in the fallow ground of men’s hearts ; but it is the Lord that giveth the early and the latter rain, whereby it groweth up and bringeth forth fruit, in some thirty, in some sixty, in some an hundred fold. The ministers of Christ, they are they whom we do believe, and by whom we do obey ; but it is the Lord that, by the powerful working of his Holy Spirit, together with the word, causeth us to believe and to obey. This honour the Lord taketh unto himself, saying, Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27, ‘I will pour out clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ; yea, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your body, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them ;’ this honour, I say, the Lord taketh to himself, and this honour he will not give to any other. But here, haply, you will ask me, if the ministers of Christ only preach the word, and the Lord reserve this power only to himself to beget us by the word ; if the ministers of Christ only teach us the way of truth, and the Spirit alone lead us into all truth, how then doth the apostle say unto the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 15, ‘I have begotten you through the gospel ?’ and how doth he say unto Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 16, ‘Take heed unto thyself, and unto learning ; continue therein : for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee ?’ Whereunto I answer, that the things which properly belong to God are oftentimes in the Scriptures attributed unto God’s ministers, because they are instruments which God useth, and whereby God worketh. So in the places alleged, ‘I,’ saith the apostle, ‘have begotten you through the gospel ;’ the apostle, because the Lord used him as his instrument to beget the Corinthians in Christ Jesus, therefore taketh that unto himself which the apostle James sheweth properly to belong unto God, where he saith, James i. 18, that ‘God of his own will begat us with the word of truth, that we should be as the first fruits of his creatures.’ And in the other place, where the apostle saith to Timothy, ‘In so doing, thou shalt save both thyself, and them that hear thee ;’ there power of saving, which doth only properly belong unto the Lord (for

it is he that saveth, and none besides him, Hos. xiii. 4), is given unto Timothy, because he was ordained the minister of Christ, whom he would use in granting repentance unto salvation. Many like places might be brought, where that which properly belongeth unto God is attributed unto God’s ministers, because of the powerful operation of God’s Spirit by his ministry ; but by this already spoken ye see what in the work of the ministry God doth, and what man doth : man preacheth the truth, but God only revealeth the truth ; man soweth the mortal* seed of the word, but God only maketh it to grow and fructify ; man speaketh the wonders of the law, but God only openeth our eyes that we may see the wondrous things of his law.

This, then, shouldest teach you so to think of us as of the ministers of Christ, and disposers of the secrets of God, but to depend upon the Lord for the revelation of those holy mysteries which we bring unto you. We can only speak unto your ears, but it is the Lord that must work in your hearts ; we can only beat upon the outward sense, but he it is that must open the eyes of your understanding ; we can only bring the word of salvation unto you, but he it is that, by his blessing upon it, must make it the word of salvation unto you. And therefore, when you come unto the house of God, ye should remember to sanctify yourselves, and as the preacher exhorteth, Eccles. v. 1, ‘When ye enter into the house of God, ye should take heed unto your feet ;’ ye should take heed with what affection, with what devotion, with what religious desire ye come to hear the word of the Lord ; ye should not come hither as to an ordinary meeting, or to a place where ye can be well content to bestow an hour, but ye should come hither prepared with all holy reverence, with souls thirsting after the word of your salvation, and with hearts and eyes lift up unto the Lord, that he will bless the preaching of the word unto you, that he by his Spirit will so work together with his word, that it may be unto you the savour of life unto life, that he will incline your hearts to hearken what the Spirit saith, and that he will open your eyes that ye may see the wondrous things of his law. And then, surely, ye should wrestle well, and should not depart without a blessing ; for though we be but men that speak unto you, whose breath is in our nostrils, and though it be not in us to give grace or understanding to our hearers, yet are we the ministers of Christ by whom ye believe ; we are, as it were, the conduits through whom the Spirit and the graces of the Spirit are conveyed unto you ; and we are his ambassadors, by whom he openeth and declarereth his holy will unto you. Yea, unto such a communion hath he joined us with him, that when Ananias had lied unto Peter, he asked him why he had lied unto the Holy Ghost. Acts v. 3 ; and that our Saviour saith, Luke x. 16, ‘He that heareth you heareth me.’ To conclude this point, ‘we do pray you, in Christ his stead, as though

* Qu. ‘immortal’ ?—En.

God did beseech you through us ;' and whatsoever good grace is wrought in you, it is God that worketh the same in you through our ministry. Be ye, therefore, diligent to frequent holy exercises, prepare yourselves with all holy reverence thereunto, pray unto the Lord that he will bless his holy ordinance unto you, hearken unto the word, not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, as the word of God, and 'receive with meekness the word that is grafted in you, which is able to save your souls ;' for thus the Lord reveal-

eth his truth, and his will unto his children ; neither are we now to look for any other revelations but such as the Lord manifesteth in and by the word.

Now remaineth the third point to be handled, where the apostle exhorteth that in the mean time, till God reveal that truth which he hath professed unto them, such grounds of the truth as already they had might with one accord be retained and maintained, which he doth in these words, ' Nevertheless, in that whereunto we are come,' &c.

LECTURE LXVI.

Nevertheless, in that whereunto we are come, let us proceed by one rule, and let us mind one thing.—PHILIP.

III. 16.

NEVERTHELESS, in that, &c. In which words the apostle exhorteth that in the mean time, till God reveal unto the Philippians that truth which he hath professed, such grounds of the truth as already they had received might with one accord be retained and maintained. This is the general scope and meaning of the apostle in these words. But it will not haply be amiss, for the better understanding of them, to unfold and open the meaning of them yet a little more particularly. They depend, as ye see, upon that which went before ; for the apostle having before exhorted the Philippians to be so minded as he was in the points before mentioned, had also said, 'and if ye be otherwise minded, God shall also reveal it.' Now, saith he, ' Nevertheless, in that whereunto we are come ;' as if he should have said, But in the mean time, till God reveal this truth unto you wherein ye now dissent from me, 'in that whereunto we are come ;' i.e. for so far as we are come, for such grounds of the truth, for such articles of the faith and Christian religion as already we do generally embrace and agree upon, let us proceed in them by one rule, and let us mind one thing. The word which the apostle useth when he saith, 'let us proceed by one rule,' *στοιχεῖν*, is a military word, borrowed from the marching of soldiers unto the battle, whose manner it is to keep their rank, and without any outraying, to march along after the prescript rule of their general or leader. So that it is as if the apostle had thus said unto them, Let us, for so far as we are come, like unto good soldiers, which turn not aside, but march on along after the prescript rule of their general, so let us walk, without turning aside to the right hand or to the left hand, after that one rule ; let us believe and live as we are directed by that one rule of his word, under whose banner we do fight ; let us, so far as we are come, walk as Christ Jesus hath taught us in his holy word. The same phrase of speech is used to the like purpose where it is said, Gal. vi. 16, ' As many as walk according to this rule ;' i.e. as many as make this word of truth, this gospel of Christ Jesus, now

preached and taught unto you, the rule and square of their faith and life, from which they will not swerve, or turn aside to the right hand or to the left, ' peace shall be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.'

Let us proceed by one rule, and let us mind one thing : i.e. let there be no dissensions amongst us, but let us be knit together in one mind and in one judgment, being of like affection one towards another in Christ Jesus. For so the phrase of speech here used signifieth, *τὸ αὐτὸν φρεστὸν*, to be of one mind, of one judgment, of one affection one towards another, so that nothing be done through contention amongst us, as it plainly appeareth both by the second verse of the second chapter of this epistle, and by divers other places, where the same phrase is used. The sum of all is as if the apostle had thus said, God will in his good time reveal his truth unto them that be as yet otherwise minded than I am. But in the mean time, till God reveal it, let us, for such grounds of the truth as already we agree upon, proceed, both in faith and in life, as we are directed by that one rule of his word under whose banner we fight, not turning aside from it to the right hand or to the left hand ; and let us be knit together in one mind and in one judgment, so that nothing be done through contention among us. This I take to be the simple and plain meaning of these words. Now let us see what profitable notes we may gather hence for our own use and instruction.

The first thing which hence I note is, touching the cause of dissensions in the church of God, whence it is that there are such dissensions and divisions in the church of God, whereby the unity and peace of the church is rent asunder and broken. Not to search farther into the causes thereof than this one scripture giveth occasion, out of this scripture I note three causes of the dissensions in the church of God. The first is, because we do not with patience expect and wait till God in his good time reveal unto us that truth which as yet is hid from our eyes. For such oftentimes is our inconsiderate headiness, that if we seem

unto ourselves to apprehend this or that point of doctrine, through the suggestions and persuasions of this or that man, by and by we adventure the defence and maintenance thereof, though Paul have preached, though the church of God have believed otherwise. We look not what it is that the church hath received, but what it is that we have apprehended; or, if we do, rather we strive to bring the church to that which we have apprehended, than we will yield unto that which the church indeed hath received; and howsoever that we teach may hazard the peace and quiet of the church, yet will we not stay ourselves, and expect till God may farther reveal his holy truth unto us. And this hath been heretofore, and is at this day, one great cause of division and dissension in the church. I might instance in divers heresies wherewith the church hath been troubled, and which have in part been caused because the authors thereof would not wait till God should reveal the truth unto them. If that ancient father Tertullian had waited till God had revealed unto him that truth which afterward he did reveal unto him, he had not been so tainted with the errors of the Millenaries and the Montanists as he was, neither had troubled the church therewith so much as he did. And if some at this day, that trouble the peace of the church with their strange doctrine, would both pray unto the Lord for the revelation of his truth, and patiently wait till the Lord should reveal his truth unto them, we should be more free from dissensions than we are.

The second cause of the dissensions in the church of God is, because we do not proceed by one rule in that whereunto we are come. For such oftentimes is our untowardliness, that in the general grounds of Christian religion, whereon we do agree, we will be flinging out of rank, and not proceed by that one rule of his word under whose banner we do fight. In the primitive church, all the churches of Christ were come unto that, that they believed the resurrection of the dead, and that they acknowledged justification by the righteousness of Christ, yet then they proceeded not by one rule in these things, but some denied the resurrection of the dead, of which sort were Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 17, and some taught that unto Christ there must be joined the works of the law, to be made righteous before God; whereupon followed then great dissensions in the church. In the reformed churches of Christ at this day generally we are come to this, that we profess that predestination unto life is not by foresight of faith or works, but by the alone good pleasure of almighty God; that the children of God cannot finally fall from faith or grace; that the children of God may and ought to assure themselves of their salvation; that it is not in man to save himself if he will; that Christ hath freed us from the pains of hell, by suffering the pains of hell for us. And if we shall not proceed by one rule in these things, but one leap out from another, what else can follow

but great dissensions in our churches? And is it not a cause of many dissensions betwixt the Romish Church and us, that we do not both proceed by one rule in that whereunto we are come? We are come to this, that we agree in the articles of the Christian faith, that we both believe in the Trinity, that we both believe one catholic and apostolic church, that we both acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, that we both look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. And yet what dissensions betwixt us and them even about these things! And why? Because they do not proceed by one rule of the holy word of life with us, but they fly out into traditions, councils, fathers, decretals, constitutions, and legends, and keep no order with us in marching along after the prescript rule of our general Christ Jesus.

The third cause of the dissensions in the church of God is, because we do not all mind one thing: for such oftentimes is our waywardness, that, when in the substance of the doctrine we agree with the church, yet will we pick a quarrel either at the professors of the truth, or at some ceremony, or at some defect in the discipline of the church, whereby we will make a schism in the church. What a stir made Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in the congregation of Israel. And whence was it? They could not abide Moses and Aaron, but took exceptions against them, saying, Num. xvi. 3, 'Ye take too much upon yon, seeing all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?' What contentions likewise were there in the church of Corinth, and how did they one swell against another. And whence was it? One held of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas, another of Christ, 1 Cor. i. 12; one would pray and prophesy bare-headed, another with his head covered, chap. xi. 4, and when they came unto the Lord's supper, one was hungry, and another was drunken, ver. 21. This distraction in mind and judgment bred among them so great dissensions, as that it may seem to have been one special cause why the apostle wrote the former epistle to the Corinthians, even to repress their dissensions, caused by their distractions in mind and in judgment. And this at this day is the cause why the Brownists and Baroists separate themselves from our assemblies, and making a schism and division, will not present themselves in our congregations. They do not charge us with corruption of doctrine, but because of some things in some ceremonies, and in our outward discipline, they cannot, they say, be of one mind with us, and therefore they break out from us. Thus ye see what the causes of the dissensions in the church of God are, at least such as this place of Scripture seemeth unto me to point at. The first, because, in things that are not yet revealed unto us, we do not with patience expect and wait till God in his good

time reveal unto us that truth which as yet is hid from our eyes. The second, because, in things that are revealed unto us, we do not proceed by that one rule of his word under whose banner we fight, but fling out some of us into traditions, decretals, constitutions, legends, and the like. The third, because we do not mind one thing, but are too ready to fall at odds, and, through contention, to make a schism, and to rend the seamless coat of Christ.

The second thing which hence I note is, touching the remedies of the dissensions in the church of God, at least of such dissensions as spring from these causes before mentioned. The remedies, according to the number of the causes, are three, each sore requiring a salve, and each cause of dissension standing in need of a remedy against it. The first remedy against dissensions, caused by not waiting till God reveal things not yet revealed, is, when any truth is not yet revealed unto us, with patience to wait till God in his good time reveal his holy truth unto us. For this we know, that he who prayed thus unto his Father, ‘ Sanctify them with thy truth, thy word is truth,’ John xvii. 17, and was heard in the things which he prayed for, will reveal his truth unto us, so far as shall be necessary for us. But in the mean time either we should so speak of the things that are not revealed unto us, as submitting that we speak unto the judgment of the prophets, as the apostle willeth, 1 Cor. xiv. 32, or else we should hold our peace, and hearken unto him unto whom God hath revealed his truth, as the same apostle willeth in the same place, saying, ver. 30, ‘ If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.’ A rule to the practice whereof the apostle seemeth unto me to exhort where he saith, Rom. xii. 3, ‘ Let no man presume to understand above that which is meet to understand, but let him understand according to sobriety, as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.’ For he which will seem to understand before it be revealed unto him, how doth he understand according to sobriety? How doth he not understand above that which is meet to understand? But the apostle would have every man to understand according to sobriety, and no man to understand above that which is meet to understand, and consequently would have all men with patience to wait till God shall reveal that unto them which as yet is hid from their eyes. In the practice of which rule, if we would be as careful as we are skilful in the knowledge of it, many of us, the church should be freed from dissensions wherewith it is troubled. As many of us, therefore, as love the peace of Zion, in the things that are not yet revealed unto us, let us with patience expect till God in his good time reveal them unto us; and in the mean time, let us either submit that we speak unto the judgment of the prophets, or else let us hold our peace, and hearken unto them unto whom God hath revealed his truth.

The second remedy against dissensions caused by

not proceeding by one rule in the things revealed, is, in the things that are revealed and generally agreed upon amongst us, to proceed by one rule, even that one rule which God hath prescribed us in his word, and not to decline from that either to the right hand or to the left. For, as the apostle saith, Gal. vi. 16, ‘ As many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.’ Whence it is clear that so we have peace both with God and amongst ourselves, if we walk according to the rule set down by the prophets and apostles. For that is the rule which he speaks of, and whereof he had said before, chap i. 9, ‘ If any man preach unto you otherwise than that ye have received, let him be accursed.’ So that as the Lord commanded Joshua, chap. i. 7, we may ‘ not depart or turn away from it to the right hand or to the left.’ To this purpose also is that of our apostle, Rom. xvi. 17, where he saith, ‘ I beseech you, brethren, mark them diligently which cause division and offences, contrary to the doctrine that ye have learned;’ in which place the apostle would have the Romans constantly to hold fast that doctrine which they had learned, signifying withal that they should not want those that would labour to cause division and offences amongst them. But thus they should avoid them, if they would continue in the things that they had learned. Whence it appeareth that it is a notable way to avoid divisions and disseusions, to believe and live after the rule of the word. By which rule, if our adversaries would have proceeded with us, they should not, by their division, have so much troubled the church; or, if yet they would proceed by this rule with us, many dissensions wherewith the church is troubled might easily be appeased. And if amongst ourselves and in our own churches we would proceed by this one rule, and not leap out unto conveniences, Christian policies, danger of innovations, and the like, whatsoever blemishes almost we have by any dissensions amongst us, might quickly be wiped out. As many of us, therefore, as love the peace of Zion, let us in the things that are revealed unto us proceed by one rule, even that one rule which God hath prescribed unto us in his holy word, and let us not turn away from it to the right hand or to the left, and so shall peace be within our walls, and plenteousness within our palaces; so shall we see Jerusalem in prosperity all her life long.

The third remedy against dissensions caused by distraction in mind and judgment, is, all to mind one thing, to be knit together in one mind and judgment: a remedy which the apostle often prescribeth, to repress such dissensions as arose in the churches that he had planted. ‘ I beseech you, brethren,’ saith he, 1 Cor. i. 10, ‘ by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak one thing, and that there be no dissensions among you; but be ye knit together in one mind and in one judgment.’ He would have no disagreeing in words amongst them, because that engenders

dissension of mind, and so repugnancy of judgment, which is the mother of schism and heresy. In a word, he would have no dissensions amongst them, and therefore he would have them all speak one thing, he would have them knit together in one mind, and in one judgment. And as here he beseecheth the Corinthians by the name of Christ Jesus, that they mind one thing, so in the epistle to the Romans he maketh a most earnest prayer unto God for them, that they might be like-minded one towards another. ‘Now,’ saith he, Rom. xv. 5, 6, ‘the God of patience and consolation give you that ye be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye with one mind and with one mouth may praise God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ So necessary he thought the consent of minds and judgments, and such a notable remedy he thought it to be against all divisions and dissensions, that he poureth out his most earnest prayer unto the Lord, that he would work in them this consent of minds and judgments, that they might mind one thing. Where withal it is to be noted, that he prayeth that they be ‘like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus;’ as also in this next chapter, Philip. iv. 2, he prayeth Euodias, and beseecheth Syntyche, that they be of one accord in the Lord. For otherwise, if we be like-minded, but not according to Christ Jesus, if we be of one accord, but not in the Lord, our consent is not an unity, but a conspiracy, such as was the consent of the high priests, scribes, and pharisees when they condemned our blessed Saviour, and of the people of the Jews, when all the multitude cried at once, saying, ‘Crucify him, crucify him; away with him, and deliver to us Barabbas;’ and of that last council held at Trent, when so many things were so antichristianly concluded against the true, ancient, catholic, and apostolick faith. If then, as we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, which is above all, and through all, and in us all, so we would be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, dissensions were easily banished if they were, and easily kept out if they were not; which rule if we had kept, or could keep so well as we should, they whose dissensions are so notoriously known, between their Franciscans and Dominicans, their Thomists and Scotists, their Cananists and Divines, should not be able to twit us so much with our dissensions as they do; neither should the Brownists and Baroists have been such an offence as they have been, if in that whereunto we are come they had been of one accord with us in the Lord. As many of us therefore as love the peace of Zion, let us be knit together in one mind, and in one judgment in the Lord; let us speak one thing, and let us be of like affection one towards another. So shall the peace of our Jerusalem be as the light of the sun, and her prosperity as the noonday. Let us by all means avoid all dissensions and divisions, and endeavour to

keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And therefore, in the things that are not yet revealed unto us, let us with patience wait till God in his good time reveal them unto us; let us in the things that are revealed unto us proceed by one rule, that one rule of God’s word, not declining from it to the right hand or to the left; and let us be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, that with one mind and one mouth we may praise God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, and so alone, shall we build, that neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron shall be heard in the Lord’s house whiles it is in building. And thus much of the remedies.

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle saith, ‘in that whereunto we are come, let us proceed by one rule,’ &c., which sheweth, that howsoever one came short of another, yet he would have every one of them, so far as they were come, to go forward, and as in marching against the enemy, the stronger to encourage the weaker, and the weaker to rank with the stronger, and both to proceed by one rule of their great general Christ Jesus. Whence I observe, that neither they that are weaker than others in faith, in knowledge, or in obedience, are to be discouraged, or to sit them down because they are weak; nor they that are stronger than others in faith, in knowledge, or in obedience, are to be puffed up in themselves, or to contemn them that are weaker because they are stronger; but every man is, according to the measure of grace that is given him, to walk by that rule which God hath prescribed him, and one to help another in fighting a good fight, and finishing their course. All of us are ranked to run, and bidden to fight, albeit unto all of us be not given like speed to run, or like strength to fight; and all of us must run and fight, though we cannot run with the speediest, or fight with the strongest. And shall we either be discouraged and sit down because we cannot match with the best, or swell and disdain because we are not as others, but as good as the best? It is as if the foot should be dismayed, and deny to go because it is not the head; and as if the head should disdain to direct the steps because it is above the foot. The father of the child that was possessed with a dumb spirit, saw, no doubt, his own weakness to be great when our Saviour said unto him, Mat. ix. 23, ‘If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;’ yet he fainted not, but holding on a good course he said, ver. 24, ‘Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief.’ And our holy apostle knew right well how strong he was in the Spirit, and how he abounded in the graces of the Spirit; yet he disdained not to become as weak unto the weak, that he might win the weak, and gain them unto Christ, 1 Cor. ix. 22. And both these marched in their rank, and fought well, inasmuch as the weak fainted not because he was weak, nor he that was strong disdained not the weak because he was strong.

Let no man, therefore, be discouraged or faint because he is weak and unable to run with the foremost. Some in marching forward must be before, and some behind. Let not him that is behind faint, but march forward. Let him march after the rule prescribed him by his general, let his word be a lantern unto his feet, and a light unto his paths, to direct his going in the way of his commandments. To have strength to run with the foremost is a great grace of God, and to be sought after by all manner [of] prayer

and supplication in the Spirit. But if thou walk forward in that weakness of thine, according to the measure of grace that is given thee, by the rule which thy God hath prescribed thee, this shall bring thee peace at the last, and guide thee unto the haven where thou wouldest be. Let not thine heart, therefore, be troubled nor fear. In what weakness soever it is that thou walkest, bless thy God that hath set thee in the way, and proceed as he giveth grace in the way.

LECTURE LXVII.

Brethren, be followers of me, and look on them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, &c.
—PHILIP. III. 17.

NOW the apostle goeth forward, and having before proposed his own example unto the Philippians, thereby both to instruct their understanding in matters of doctrine, and likewise to stir them up unto all holy desires in the whole course of their life, now he exhorteth them to follow his example, and the example of such as he is, that in him they may have a pattern to rectify their judgments in the truth, and to follow after Christian perfection in all holy conversation of their life. Here, then, first, we have the apostle's exhortation unto the Philippians; secondly, certain reasons to move them to hearken unto his exhortation; the exhortation in these words, 'Brethren,' &c.; the reasons in the verses following unto the end of the chapter. His exhortation consisteth of two parts: first, that the Philippians would be followers of him; neither doth the word simply signify followers, but that they would be followers together of him, *εναποιηται*; which may have a double meaning, either that they would all, with one mind and with one heart, jointly together follow his example, or else that, as other churches which he had planted in the faith followed his example, so they likewise, together with them, would follow his example. Howsoever that be meant, it is clear that the apostle would have the Philippians to look at him, and as they had heard him to be minded, and seen him to walk, so he would have them to follow him in wholesomeness of doctrine, and integrity of life. He knew that examples, as ordinarily they are wont to do with men, might much prevail with them. Lest, therefore, they should haply be drawn away by the examples of the false teachers, having, it may be, a greater show of holiness in their life than they had soundness of judgment in the truth, he draweth them unto his own example, and exhorteth them to be followers of him.

The second part of his exhortation is, that they would follow the example of them that were like unto him, being so minded towards the truth as he was, and walking so in holy conversation of life as he did. For unto the former part of his exhortation, that they

should be followers of him, there might haply exception be taken, that he was much absent from them, that he was now in prison, that it was hard to tie them to the imitation of one man, to one man's example. He doth not, therefore, tie them to the imitation of himself alone, but having exhorted them to be followers of him, he saith, and look on them with a diligent eye unto them, (*συνειδεῖτε*, as unto the mark wherat ye shoot) which walk so, so soundly grounded in the truth, and so earnestly endeavouring after Christian perfection in this life, as ye have us for an ensample, in whose doctrine is nothing but pure, in whose life is nothing but holy. So that he allows them to follow the example of other than himself, but withal he doth not leave it unto their choice to follow whom they will, but marks them out what manner of men they should choose for examples to follow, namely, such as were like him, and such as of whom they might truly say, he walks so, he embraceth the same truth, and ordereth his whole life as our apostle did. The sum, then, of his exhortation is as if he had thus said, Brethren, ye have heard and know how I am minded towards the truth, and how I follow hard towards perfection in my life. Be ye followers of me in both these things, and walk so as ye have me for an ensample. Neither do I tie you only to myself, to follow me, but look who they are that walk so, shewing themselves an ensample of good works, with uncorrupt doctrine, with gravity, integrity, and with the wholesome word which cannot be reproved, as ye have me for an ensample; and look diligently on them, and follow them as they follow me, and both of us Christ. Which being the meaning of these words in this exhortation, let us now further see what notes we may gather hence for our use and instruction.

The first thing which I note is, that the apostle would have the Philippians to follow the example, not of whomsoever each man in his private fancy did best like of, but of him, and of such others as walked so as they had him for an ensample. Whence I observe, that, in the course of our Christian walking, we are to

follow the example of such as by their holy walking shew plainly that they have been brought up in the school of Christ, and that they are the faithful children of God. An ordinary thing it is for men to look at the example of others, and so to walk as they have others for example; for the example of others going before us is a great inducement unto us to do the like, whether the thing be good or evil. We see the manifold examples of holy men mentioned in the holy word of God, even so many and so divers, as that whether we look for direction in the general course of Christianity, or in the particular calling wherein we are placed, we cannot want multitude of examples to direct us. And wherefore hath the Holy Ghost set them down but for our use, that we might so walk as we have them for examples? For, as the apostle saith, Rom. xv. 4, ' whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.' The prince in Josiah, the counsellor in Hushai, the rich man in Abraham, the poor man in the Shunamite, the great officers of great men in the eunuch of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia, the captive in Daniel and the three children, the banished in Joseph, the afflicted in body or goods in Job, the soldier in Cornelius, the merchant in those merchants that help to build the walls of Jerusalem, the artificer in those that wrought in the work of the temple, the husbandman, and those that are occupied about cattle, in Noah and the patriarchs, women in Sarah and those that are mentioned in the Acts, the magistrate in Moses and Joshua, the ministers of Christ in the apostles of Christ, have notable examples after which they may walk, and be directed in their several Christian duties. No course of life, no state of calling, no condition of either sex, but may have examples in the word for all holy direction in every holy course. And if we look even into our own times wherein we live, we shall not hear of that duty enjoined unto us, but we shall hear or see those that have, to their high praise both with God and men, performed it before us. This, then, we must know, that these examples, both old and new, are in this manner set before our eyes, to the end that we might be led thereby unto those Christian duties which the Lord our God requireth at our hands, which make profession of his glorious gospel. For of this we may be sure, that if the multitude of holy examples wherein we are beset, shall not prevail with us to do the like, they shall assuredly be so many witnesses against us, to the increasing of our condemnation.

Now, herewithal, we must note, that the life of such holy saints of God as either have lived before us, or do now presently live with us, is not, nor may be, any certain or perpetual rule unto us of religion, piety, or Christian life. For none of all the saints of God, were they never so holy, never so dear in God's sight, but they have had their blemishes in their lives, budding out of that natural corruption which they drew from the loins of our first parents. Noah, that

preacher of righteousness, is noted for drunkenness; just Lot with incest; Abraham, the father of the faithful, with lying; Isaac, the seed promised by God, with the same fault; Jacob, that wrestled with God and prevailed, with the same fault; Joseph, preserved from many dangers by God's providence, with profane swearing; Moses, unto whom God spake face to face, with murmuring; David, a man after God's own heart, with murder and adultery; Peter with denying his Master Christ; Paul with boasting of his revelations; James and John with ambition; and the like is to be said of all other the saints of God; none that may not justly be noted with some blemish in their life; so that none of all their examples may be unto us the rule of our life. Only the word, which is a lantern unto our feet and a light unto our steps, is the rule of our life. All examples of men, if they be looked into, will be found too crooked to make a straight rule. Only the example of Christ Jesus, both God and man, is without all exception a perfect example, all whose actions are our instructions, and whose whole life is a thorough direction for our whole life.

In the imitation, then, and following of the saints of God, to make an holy use thereof, we must observe these rules: 1. That we do not otherwise follow the example of them than they follow the example of Christ. So the apostle teacheth us, where he saith, 1 Cor. xi. 1, ' Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.' If, then, Paul be exalted through the abundance of revelations, whereas Christ hath taught us to be meek and lowly in heart; or if Peter deny his Master, whereas Christ hath told us that whosoever denieth him before men he will also deny him before his Father which is in heaven: here we must leave Peter and Paul, and follow our master Christ. Him we must always follow, and Peter and Paul, and other of God's saints, as they follow him, but not otherwise. If they be fervent in love as Christ was, meek and lowly in heart as Christ was, patient in trouble as Christ was, ready to forgive as Christ was, be earnest in prayer as Christ was, if they go about his business that sent them as Christ did, in these and the like, wherein they follow Christ, we are to follow them.

The second rule to be observed in the imitation of the saints of God; that we follow them not in things peculiarly belonging unto them, but in the things which they did as Christians. For so to follow Christ Jesus himself in the things which peculiarly belong unto himself were very absurd; as to follow him in fasting forty days and forty nights, in walking upon the seas, in causing the surging waves to cease with his word, in cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and the like, whereby he shewed himself to be the true Messiah; and so likewise to follow Abraham in offering up of his son Isaac, to follow Moses in smiting the stony rock, that waters may run in dry places, to follow the apostles in preaching from city to city, and not to settle in any one place, were an imitation so

foolish as that it should want all ground of reason and warrantee. And therefore, when James and John said unto Christ, ‘Wilt thou that we command that fire come down from heaven, as Elias did?’ Christ rebuked them, and said, ‘Ye know not of what spirit ye are,’ Luke ix. 54, 55; as if he should have said, Elias did so indeed, but ye are not herein to follow Elias. We are therefore to observe what they did by peculiar office, authority, or commandment, and not to labour to follow them therein, and what they did generally as Christians, and therein to follow them as they follow Christ.

The third rule to be observed in the imitation of the saints of God is, that in earnest desire to be like unto them, we resemble, as near as we can, such holy actions of faith towards God, and love towards all saints as they were most renowned for. For to eat and drink, to talk and walk, to borrow and lend, and the like, which nature teacheth, are no actions of imitation; but to love one another as David and Jonathan did; to redeem our own peace and quietness with some loss, as Abraham did; to be faithful in the Lord’s house, as Moses was; to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to judge the fatherless and widow, as Job did; to delight in the law of the Lord, and to exercise ourselves therein day and night, as David did; to serve the Lord with fasting and prayer, as Anna did; to sit down at Jesus’s feet, and hear his preaching, as Mary did; to restore with vantage that which was taken by forged cavillation, as Zacheus did: these and such like are the actions wherein we should earnestly desire to resemble the saints of God as near as we can. And if we mark it, in the places where we are precisely exhorted to follow the example of the saints of God, we are exhorted to follow them in these and the like things, as in believing that faith is imputed unto us for righteousness, as it was to Abraham, Rom. iv. 23; in suffering affliction for Christ his sake, 1 Cor. iv. 16; in not seeking private profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved, chap. xi. 1; in labouring carefully, and not walking inordinately, 2 Thes. iii. 8; in following after perfection Christianly, and embracing the truth zealously, as in this place of our apostle. More rules, I doubt not, might be noted; but these being observed, we shall make an holy use of following the example of the saints of God in the whole course of our life.

But if we do consider what holy use we make of such examples of the saints of God as either have been or are, it will appear that many of us make little or no benefit at all of them. For, not to speak of great princes and counsellors, whom it were to be wished that they were like unto good Josias and faithful Hushai; our rich men, do they not more resemble that rich man in the gospel, Luke xvi., that was clothed richly, and fared delicately every day, but never regarded poor Lazarus, that lay at his gate full of sores, begging some crumbs that fell from his table,

than Abraham? The poorer sort, do they not more resemble those four lepers that first entered into one tent, and spoiled it, and then into another, and spoiled it, 2 Kings vii. 8, than the good Shunamite? Our artificers and tradesmen, do they not more resemble Demetrius and his company, mentioned in the Acts, xix. 24, that made more account of their gain, and of their bellies, than of Paul, of the preacher, or of the preaching of the word, than those that wrought in the work of the temple? Our countrymen, and they that are occupied about their cattle and their grounds, do they not more resemble those that could not discern between their right hand and their left hand, Jonah iv. 11, that had no knowledge in the ways of God, or the things that belonged unto their peace, than Noah or the patriarchs? Our magistrates, do they not more resemble those of whom Solomon speaketh, Prov. xxix. 2, that when they rise up men hide themselves, when they bear rule the people sigh, than Moses or Joshua? Our ministers, do not they resemble more those of whom the apostle saith, Philip. ii. 21, ‘that they sought their own, and not that which was Jesus Christ’s,’ than the apostles of Christ? Surely so it fareth with too, too many, that they are more like the worst than the best. For if it be so that haply we do look at the examples of the saints of God, what do we? For examples of the saints of God, mentioned in the word of God, either we say that they are only to be wondered at, but not to be imitated, or else we follow them in the things wherein we ought not. If Samson say, Judges xv. 11, ‘As they did unto me, so have I done unto them,’ by and by we persuade ourselves that we may lawfully be revenged of our enemies. If Elisha curse them that mock him, even unto the death, and tearing in pieces by bears, 2 Kings ii. 24, by and by we think we have a good defence for us if we curse those that wrong us even unto hell. And if Moses or Jeremiah draw back the shoulder when the Lord calls them, by and by we think we may be excused if we do not always hearken when the Lord doth call us to this or that duty. And so likewise in the rest; either we think them only to be admired, but not to be imitated, or if we do imitate them, it is either in the things that we should not, or as we should not, only looking unto some thing which they did, but not considering the manner, or the cause, or some other circumstance of doing that they did, or that they sinned in that they did.

Again, for examples of such of God’s saints as live among us, and whose practice we may see daily before our eyes, when we are told of them, we scorn that their actions should be precedents for us to follow; yea, such is our corruption, that oftentimes we are not ashamed to say, Do such and such men favour such a godly work, further such an holy action, countenance such a religious exercise, we will hinder it, we will cross it, we will crush it, or else we will take the foil; nay, to let them see and know how little we care

to be like them, doth masking when there should be mourning for the heavy hand of God upon us grieve them, doth swearing and profaning of the Lord's day grieve them, we will do these things the rather to despise* them. If they be men fearing God, eschewing evil, and doing the thing that is good, we will have some exception against them wherefore we will not follow their example; and commonly we will brand them with the name of austere and precise men, and then will we be so far from following their example as that we will both cross what good they intend if we can, and besides we will grieve them either by ourselves or others as much as we can. This is the use that generally we make either of old or new examples, past or present.

But, beloved, it should be far otherwise, as already we have heard. Yea, a great cause it should be unto us of thankfulness unto our God for his great mercy towards us, in that he hath vouchsafed to beset us with so many old and new examples of his holy saints, whereby we might be drawn to walk in such an holy course as they walked. Let us therefore be thankful unto our God for them, and to testify our thankfulness let us always remember them, and in our lives follow the holy practice of them. For for that purpose were they written, which are commended in holy Scripture unto us. And, as I told you, let us be sure of this, that if the multitude of holy examples, past and present, wherewith we are compassed, shall not prevail with us to be followers of them, they shall most undoubtedly be so many witnesses against us, to the increasing of our just condemnation. Thus much of this note.

The second thing which I note is from the person of him that exhorted the Philippians, which was Paul their apostle, who had taught them the truth in Christ Jesus, and had walked in all holy conversation amongst them. Whence I observe that the ministers of Christ are not only to teach the truth of Christ Jesus with uncorrupt doctrine, with gravity, integrity, and with the wholesome word which cannot be reproved, but withal to be such examples unto their flocks as that they may say with the apostle, 'Be ye followers of me, and of such as walk so as ye have me for an example.' This our apostle required of Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 12, where he said unto him, 'Let no man despise thy youth, but be unto them that believe an ensample in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in pureness.' And likewise of Titus, where he said, Tit. ii. 7, 8, 'Above all things shew thyself an example of good works, with uncorrupt doctrine, with gravity, integrity, and with the wholesome word which cannot be reproved, that he which withstandeth may be ashamed, having nothing concerning you to speak evil of.' And that which the apostle required of Timothy and Titus, and in them of all the ministers of Christ, that the apostle requireth of all, where he saith, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 'Feed the flock of God which

* Qu. 'despite'?—ED.

dependeth upon you, caring for it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as though ye were lords over God's heritage, but that ye may be ensamples to the flock.' And this the very names given unto them in the holy Scripture requireth of them, in that they are called a city set on a hill, that is looked unto far and near; lights that must shine before men by good works, shepherds that must feed by the word and by example, guides that must direct by the wholesome word of truth and by holiness of life, watchmen that must not fail to give warning, both by doctrine and by life, &c. Yea, the diversity of the dispositions of their flock requireth this of them. For though Lydia attend unto the things which Paul speaks, and hearing believeth, though some receive instruction by hearing the holy word of life, yet must they generally be drawn on, both by the wholesome word and by example of an holy life, or else they will profit but little, or nothing at all. For so it is generally, that the minister's life and behaviour is regarded as much, if not more, as his doctrine. And doth not reason itself require, that, as the knowledge of God's will is first revealed unto them, and by their ministry unto the people, so they should be the first and most forward in the execution of every Christian duty, to the end that it may appear that they teach others no course of life but that which they themselves do with all carefulness walk in? Yes, surely, both precept, and the names given unto them, and the nature of them that are to be instructed, and reason itself, requireth this of Christ his ministers, that they feed the flock of God which dependeth on them, both by the holy word of truth, and likewise by holy example of life. And doing thus, their example of life, of all others, that live with us, ought to be followed. The sheep, of all others, ought to hear their pastor's voice, and they that are to be led in the way are to follow, of all others, them that are appointed to be their guides, when their shepherds and their guides shine as holy lights before them, and hold out the word of life unto them.

Exception, I know, will easily be taken, and I wish it might not justly be taken; but it will be excepted and said, that if ministers were such as now we speak of, ye would follow them, and walk as ye had them for an ensample. But how few such ministers be there! How many be there that are both wicked in life and unable to teach! How many be there of those that do teach, that though they can speak smoothly and finely, as they think, yet do more hurt by their lewd and wicked example of life in one year than their doctrine will do good in their whole life! True it is, the complaint is too just of too many; and better it had been they had been stiled in their cradles than thus they should have opened men's mouths against them, to the scandal of their calling. For though they shall say in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?'—for I let the lewd

and unlearned beasts go, and leave them to their judgments that run before they be sent,—though, I say, they shall say in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied and preached in thy name?’ yet shall it be said unto them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity,’ Mat. vii. 23. Whatsoever they preached, if they wrought iniquity, they shall not be able to stand in the judgment, nor in the congregation of the righteous.

But, beloved, it standeth you upon to look unto it how just your exception is against his life whose doctrine is sound. For oftentimes the ministers of Christ which teach the truth purely are charged to offend in example of life, whenas in truth their life is no way to be reproved. But admit that his life be not answerable to his teaching; this should be no reason for thee to give less credit or obedience to the doctrine of truth which he delivereth. For our Saviour hath taught thee to hearken unto him if he sit in Moses’s seat, Mat. xxiii. 3, and to do as he saith, though thou may not do as he doth, if he say well, and do not accordingly. It is his doctrine, not his life, that thou must look unto. Oh, but thou wilt say, Why should I believe him, or do as he saith, when he doth clean contrary himself; surely that which he saith is but for fashion’s sake, he knoweth some nearer way to

heaven than he tells us of, else he would never do clean contrary; and therefore thou wilt venture as well as he, and do as he doth, how bad soever it be. Well, dally as thou list in a matter of no dalliance. If when he saith well and doth ill thou care not what he say, but do as he doth, thy blood shall be required at his hands, but thou shalt die in thy sins; and see thou what thou hast gained by thy dalliance. I wish indeed that no such exception could justly be taken against the doctrine or life of any in the ministry. For certainly such as, both by the wholesome word and by an holy life, preach unto the people, be the holy ministers whose labours are found fruitful. But if their life be not agreeable to their teaching, do ye take heed how ye neglect the word of salvation preached and taught unto you. And they, whomsoever the Lord hath blessed with such teachers as go in and out before them in soundness of doctrine, and holiness of life, let them take heed how they follow not their example, and hearken [not] unto their voice. If ye shall closely and cunningly seek their disturbance, to withdraw yourselves from the light and easy yoke of hearkening unto them, and following them, your judgment shall be just, whatsoever it shall be. But blessed shall ye be if ye hearken unto their voice, and so walk as ye have them for an ensample.

LECTURE LXVIII.

For many walk, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.—PHILIP. III. 18.

NOW follow the reasons to move the Philippians to hearken unto his exhortation, which was, to be followers of him, and to look on such as walked so as they had him for an ensample.

For many walk, &c. This is the first reason which the apostle useth to move the Philippians to hearken unto his exhortation. His reason, ye see, is drawn from a contrary example, and the danger that followeth such walking as these many use which he speaketh of. Why, then, would the apostle have the Philippians to follow his example, and the example of such as walked as he did? Because there were many ill walkers, whose example if they followed, they were to look for the like end that is destined unto them, even damnation; such as were those whom in the beginning of this chapter he called dogs, evil workers, the concision; whom he now again describeth by five notes, as, 1, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; 2, that their end is damnation; 3, that their god is their belly; 4, that their glory is to their shame; 5, that they mind earthly things. In that he saith, ‘many walk,’ he signifieth the more danger of them because they are many. Again, in that he saith, that he ‘had often told them of them,’ he signifieth both his own continual care over them, and the greatness

of the danger by those evil walkers, which caused him so often to tell them of them. Again, in that he now tells them of them weeping, he signifieth both his own entire affection towards them, and likewise his grief and sorrow of heart that either there should be any such enemies of the gospel to trouble them, or that they should give their ear unto them. Again, in that he noteth them to be ‘the enemies of the cross of Christ,’ he signifieth their corruption in doctrine and in life. In doctrine, for that by urging the necessity of circumcision and the works of the law unto righteousness and salvation, they made the cross of Christ to be of no effect, and abolished the work of our redemption by Christ Jesus. For, as the apostle saith, Gal. ii. 21, ‘if righteousness be by the law,’ which these men taught, ‘then Christ died without cause.’ In life, for that they would not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, and therefore applied themselves to the humour of the Jews, and preached unto them circumcision and the law. In both these, then, that by their doctrine they detracted from the merits of Christ his cross, and redemption by his blood, and avoided to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, the smart whereof they felt that sincerely preached Christ crucified; in both these, I say, they shewed

themselves to be enemies unto the cross of Christ. Again, in that he noteth their end or reward for the recompence of such their walking to be damnation or destruction, he signifieth how needful it is for the Philippians, if they fear their end, to fear likewise so to walk as they do, so to believe and live as they do. Again, in that he noteth their god to be their belly, he signifieth what principally they respected in preaching of Christ, namely, their profit, their pleasure, and their ease. They preached Christ, not sincerely, and purely, for Christ his sake, but with reference to please others, and to seek their own good. Inasmuch therefore as they were lovers of pleasure, of profit, of ease, more than lovers of good, the apostle saith that their god was their belly, that being each man's god which he best loveth. Again, in that he noteth their glory to be their shame, he signifieth either that they glory in those things, as in circumcision, and the ordinances of Moses, whereof they ought rather to be ashamed, as some think, or that the vain glory and estimation which they seek after amongst men, neglecting the true glory of Christ Jesus, shall turn to their confusion and shame, as I rather think the words to be understood. Lastly, in that he noteth them to 'mind earthly things,' he signifieth their study and delight, and all their affections to be set on honours, wealth, friends, commodities, and the things which are on the earth, and not on the things which are above. So that if we mark it, as in the whole there is a general reason to move the Philippians to follow him, and such as he was, because of many false teachers which walk inordinately, so in each point of this general reason, as it is set down, there is a several reason to the same purpose. For why would he have them to follow this example, and the example of such as he was? Because many walked to and fro, which sheweth that they might easily fall upon those which were bad, being many, of whom he had told them often; which sheweth, as his care, so the greatness of the danger, if they should fall upon them and follow them, and of whom now when he wrote this epistle to them he told them weeping, which shews, as his affection towards them, so his grief, that either there should be such, or that they should hearken unto such; that they are 'the enemies of the cross of Christ,' derogating from the merits of Christ his cross, and avoiding persecution for the cross of Christ, 'whose end is damnation,' which may justly fear any from following them; 'whose god is their belly,' which sheweth that they seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's; 'whose glory is to their shame,' which sheweth the confusion that shall come upon that estimation which they seek after amongst men; 'which mind earthly things,' which sheweth their worldly minds, and earthly cogitations: every of which several points ought to stand for a reason with the Philippians, to move them to hearken to his exhortation. And now that we see the meaning and force of these words in this reason of

the apostle, let us also see what notes we may gather hence for our own use and instruction.

The first thing I note is, that the apostle saith, he told them often of these enemies of the cross of Christ, whereof he now calleth them. And so, in the beginning of this chapter, he said that 'it grieved him not to write the same things unto them whereof before he had told them.' And what was that? That they should beware of dogs, of evil workers, of the concision; whereby the apostle sheweth his own continual care over them, and likewise the greatness of the danger by these enemies of the gospel of Christ, which caused him so often to tell them of them. Whence I observe the great care which ought to be in the pastor over the people committed to his charge, once and again, continually to warn and admonish them of such things as may be dangerous and hurtful unto them. Our blessed Saviour, the good shepherd and great bishop of our souls, hath by his own example taught us to do so. For, as we read, he ceased not to tell his disciples of ravening wolves, of such as would deliver them up to the councils, and would scourge them in their synagogues; of being baptized with his baptism; he ceased not to warn them to beware of the scribes and pharisees, to beware of the leaven of the pharisees, to take heed and beware of covetousness. Our holy apostle likewise, as a follower of Christ, professeth unto the Ephesians, Acts xx. 31, that he 'ceased not to warn every one, both night and day, with tears, of grievous wolves which, after his departure, would enter amongst them, not sparing the flock'; and often he warneth the churches unto which he writeth to beware of division and dissension. Will they, then, that have the oversight of any people walk as they have Christ, and our holy apostle for an ensample? It may not grieve them to tell their people often of such kind of men, and such manner [of] things as may be dangerous and hurtful for them.

And this often beating upon the same thing, what ought it to teach you, men and brethren? Surely if we tell you often of some thing whereof we would have you to take heed and beware, it may be an argument unto you that the greatness of the danger, and the grievousness of the sin, causeth us so often to urge it, and to beat upon it. Do we, then, often tell you of profaning the Lord's day, of negligence in coming to this and the like places to hear the word of the Lord, of giving your members weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, and the like? Do we often warn you to beware of those that compass sea and land to make one of their profession, and when he is made they make him twofold more the child of hell than they themselves are; of those that through covetousness seek, with feigned words, to make merchandise of your souls; of those that live at ease in Sion, and put far from them all remembrance of the evil day, and the like? Assure yourselves the danger is great if ye do not hearken; and the punishment of

your sin lieth at your door, if you reform not that sin, whatsoever it be, whereof ye are so often told. Look well, therefore, unto it, whensoever ye are often told of anything to be reformed, and think not with yourselves that it is but a small matter, and that there needs not half so much ado about it, but persuade yourselves that it much concerneth you to redress it. And whether it be for any manner of thing to be reformed, or for any kind of person to be avoided, defer not too long to hearken to that which is told so often.

Again, this often telling you of the same thing to be reformed or avoided, may put you in mind of that natural corruption which hangeth so fast on you. Much ado to bring us to the mortification of the old man ; and though we be told again and again of such sins as hold us captive at their own pleasure, yet can we be content to put off from day to day, and with the sluggard to say, ‘ Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep,’ Prov. vi. 10. But let us know that this is a part of natural corruption, to stand in need so often to be told, or not to hearken when we are told so often. Let us, therefore, shake off this corruption, and either let us not need so often to be told of anything, or at least when we are so often told, let us hearken and obey, and avoid or reform whatsoever it is that we are warned and admonished of. For as it is the pastor’s duty to tell us of things to be reformed or avoided, so is it our duty to hearken and obey when we are told ; and this duty to tell us often of such things is imposed upon the pastor, because of the negligent performance of our duty to hearken and obey when we are told. Let us, therefore, at all times give all diligence to hearken unto the things that belong unto our peace, and to obey from the heart that form of doctrine whereunto we are delivered, to conform ourselves according unto it.

The second thing which I note is, that the apostle saith that now, at the writing hereof, he tells them weeping of these enemies of the cross of Christ ; whereby the apostle sheweth both his great affection towards the Philippians, and his great grief that either there should be such, or that they should hearken unto such. Whence I observe the great and godly affection which ought to be in the pastor towards his people, even so great that it should grieve him, and even cause him to shed tears, to see the enemies of the truth to trouble his people, or to see his people drawn into any sin or error by any that are otherwise than well and godly-minded. For thus we testify generally our affection unto the church of God, if we be grieved to see it assaulted by the dragon, or the dragon any way to prevail against it. We see how Samuel mourned for Saul, when by his disobedience he had provoked the Lord to anger against him, 1 Sam. xv. 35. We see how the prophet Jeremiah, chap. ix. 1, wished that his ‘ head

were full of water, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people ;’ and how in another place, chap. iv. 19, he crieth, ‘ My belly, my belly ! I am pained even at the very heart ; mine heart is troubled within me : I cannot be still, for my soul hath heard the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of the battle.’ We see how our blessed Saviour beheld the city Jerusalem, and wept for it, saying, Luke xix. 41, 42, ‘ Oh, if thou hadst even known, at the least in this thy day, those things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.’ We see, likewise, how our apostle testifieth of himself, 2 Cor. ii. 4, that in great affliction and anguish of heart he wrote his former epistle to the Corinthians, with many tears, caused no doubt partly by their divisions and dissensions, and partly by that incestuous person. And such should be the zealous and ardent affection of all faithful pastors towards their people, and towards God’s church, as that they should be grieved at the heart for the wicked that trouble them, for the sins that reign amongst them, and for the desolation that will follow, if speedy conversion and repentance prevent it not. Yea, they should water and wash their threatenings and their exhortations with their tears, in token of their tender affection and great compassion towards their people, and towards the church.

And should we, men and brethren, mourn for you, and should you give place to the devil, and to such his wicked instruments as seek to drown you in perdition ? Should we be grieved at the heart for you, and should ye walk on in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful ? Should we be touched in our souls that our labour should be in vain amongst you ; and should ye go on in the wickedness of your ways, drinking iniquity like water, and drawing on sin with cords of vanity as it were with cart-ropes ? Nay, beloved, by this *our* duty, learn ye *your* duty. For if we ought to be thus affected towards you, then bethink yourselves well how ye ought to be affected in yourselves. Surely if it should wring tears from our eyes to see you sort yourselves with the wicked, and to suffer yourselves to be drawn away with their error, it should make you to water your couch with tears, and to mingle your drink with weeping. If it should touch us in our souls to see you give your members weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, and to serve sin in the lusts thereof, it should fill your souls full of heaviness, and plunge you in sorrow of heart unto the nethermost hell. If it should grieve us to see you, after that ye have escaped from the filthiness of the world through the knowledge of the Lord, and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, to be yet again entangled therein and overcome, it should vex you even unto the death, and cause you to pour out your souls unto the Lord in the bitterness of your spirit. Whatsoever it is concerning you should grieve us, should much more

cause you to mourn in soul, and to be troubled in your spirits. For what is it that doth or should cause us to mourn for you, and to be full of heaviness for you? Our desire is to present you holy and unblameable in that day. And here is our grief, that you suffer yourselves to be seduced by the world and wicked ones, and that our labour is in vain amongst you. Consider, then, with yourselves, how ye ought to be grieved in yourselves, and take heed how ye be not grieved in yourselves for the things whereat your godly pastors are grieved. It grieved, no doubt, then, Noah, that preacher of righteousness, that the people in his time so provoked the Lord to anger by their cruelty and wickedness, Gen. vi.; but they regarded not his grief, and therefore the Lord 'brought in the flood upou the world of the ungodly.' Just Lot vexed his righteous soul with the unclean conversation of the wicked, and with their unlawful deeds, Gen. xix.; but they regarded it not, and when he told them of God's judgments, he seemed, even to his sons-in-law, as though he had mocked; and therefore the Lord rained upon them fire and brimstone, and destroyed them. Jeremiah was in great anguish of spirit for the rebellion of the stiff-necked Jews; but they regarded it not, and therefore the Lord delivered them into the will of their enemies, and they that hated them were lords over them. Take heed, theu, how ye regard it not when your pastors are grieved on your behalf; take heed how ye make light of such sins as they grieve to see you defiled withal, but rather sorrow for them, that their sorrow may be turned into joy, and your joy may be full, even 'both yours and theirs. In their joy over you, ye have just cause of rejoicing, and in their grief for you ye have just cause of grief. Look, therefore, that they may rejoice over you, for that shall be your joy; and take heed that they may not mourn or grieve for you, for that shall be your grief.

Again, hence I observe a notable comfort for the faithful and painful ministers of Jesus Christ. Hath he in all good conscience laboured in the work of the Lord, and doth he not see the desired fruits of his labours? Paul, the great apostle of Christ, mighty in the Scriptures, and much renowned for many great miracles which he wrought, yet laboured in vain with many which he taught, insomuch that the consideration of them with whom he laboured so much, with so little profit, made him weep and shed tears, as in this place. It may net, then, seem strange unto us if our labour with many be in vain. But it standeth upon them that hear us, to look unto it that our labour be not in vain amongst them; for though they be not gathered, yet shall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and our labour shall not be in vau in the Lord; but if they be not gathered, they shall be scattered from the presence of the Lord, and of the Lamb for evermore. Give, therefore, all diligence that we may rejoice in the day of Christ, that we have

not run in vain, nor laboured in vain amongst you, for that will be profitable for you. Labour that we may 'give accounts for you with joy, and not with grief, for that will be unprofitable for yeu,' Heb. xiii. 17. Let us have mutual joy one of another, and let our jey be in the Lord.

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle saith, that 'many walk up and down which are the enemies of the cross of Christ;' whereby the apostle signifieth the great danger that there was of them, because they were many; for that it would be hard for the Philippians not to light on some of them, and to be seduced by them, unless they should diligently look on him, and such as he was. Whence I observe, that it is not always safe to follow a multitude, but commonly rather dangerous; for, Mat. vii. 13, 'many there are that go in at the wide gate, and walk in the broad way;' but it is dangerous to follow them, for 'the way leads to destruction.' And again our Saviour hath told us, Mat. xxiv. 5, that 'many should come in his name, and deceive many.' Yea, commonly the multitude is the worst. What were the rest of the old world besides Noah and his family? Ten had been but a small number of righteous men to have been found in the great city of Sodom; yet were not ten found there. How often were all the multitude of the Israelites ready to stone Moses and Aaron! But one Elias unto four hundred and fifty of Baal's prophets, but one Micah unto four hundred false prophets; and how often doth Paul complain that, a great door and effectual being opened unto him, he had many adversaries; that there were many which made merchandise of the word of God, many which were disobedient, and vain talkers, and deceivers of minds! How often doth John complain of many antichrists, many false prophets! Nay, in what age hath not the little flock of Christ lived in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, beset with a world of wickedness and wicked men? Where Christ hath his church, there the devil hath more than a chapel, even five hundred synagogues his instruments to work his will so far as they can. So that if we follow the most, we shall commonly follow the worst.

A good hold, then, have they of it, that make this to be one of the notes of their church. Christ calls his church a little flock, and Isaiah calls it a little remnant, and Jeremiah a small seed. But well may she stand on her multitude that hath made all nations drunken with the wine of the wrath of her fornications, and so let her do till the smoke of her burning ascend. But why or whence is it that we in our ordinary life stand so much upon the multitude? What more common amongst us than to say, that we will do as the most do, we will not single ourselves from the rest, &c.? Nay, is not that profane and wicked speech often heard amongst us, that it is good going with company, though it be to the devil? But, beloved our God hath taught us another lesson: Exod. xxiii.'

2, ‘Thou shalt not,’ saith he, ‘follow a multitude to do evil, neither agree in a controversy to decline after many to overthrow the truth.’ And our apostle here tells us, that many walk that are the enemies of the cross of Christ; but we may not walk after them, but after him, and such as he is. For we are not to look how many do walk thus and thus, but who walk as they should; nor how many walk in this or that way, but what the way is wherein they do walk; and though all the rest bow the knee to Baal, yet we may not; though all the nations of the earth fall down before the beast and worship him, yet may not we. What if in an election of an officer and magistrate, the rest, or far the greater part, consent upon an unfit man, yet may not I. Oh, but I shall make myself

odious if I single out myself from the rest, and prevail never a whit. Yea, but good prophet Michaiah stood upon no such points, but that though he should, by standing single against four hundred false prophets, become odious unto Ahab the king, and all the prophets, and not prevail, yet he spake the truth, 1 Kings xxii. Here I have a good example; I must walk as I have him for an ensample. And so, generally, let us not look how many do thus, or how we may prevail, if we single ourselves, but let us do as we ought, whatsoever come of it, and howsoever all do otherwise. *Et hoc sciamus, fortiorum esse qui pro nobis est, quam qui contra nos sunt omnes.* ‘And this let us know, that he is stronger who is for us, than all they who are against us.’

LECTURE LXIX.

That they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is damnation, whose god is their belly, &c.

—PHILIP. III. 18, 19.

THUS far we have already proceeded in this first reason of the apostle, which he used to move the Philippians to follow him, and such as he was; ‘for many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping,’ &c.

Now follow the five notes whereby the apostle describeth these many walkers of whom he had told them often, and now told them weeping. The first note whereby he describeth them is, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; which branch of his reason might well stand for a sufficient reason with the Philippians to move them not to walk after these, but to follow him, and to walk so as they had him for an ensample. Now the apostle calleth them the enemies of the cross of Christ in two respects. (1.) Because by urging the necessity of circumcision, and the works of the law, unto righteousness and salvation, they made the cross of Christ to be of none effect, and abolished the work of our redemption by the blood of Christ Jesus. (2.) Because they would not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, and therefore applied themselves to the humour of the Jews, and preached unto them circumcision and the law; for thus, both in doctrine detracting from the merits of Christ his cross, and redemption by his blood, and likewise in life, following after carnal security, and avoiding persecution for Christ crucified, they shewed themselves to be enemies unto the cross of Christ.

Hence, then, I observe who they be that are the enemies of the cross of Christ, namely, they that in their doctrine detract from the merit of Christ his cross, and the work of our redemption by the blood of Christ Jesus finished upon the cross; and they likewise that in their life follow after carnal delicacy, and fly persecution for the cross of Christ, for Christ crucified: even both these sorts of men are enemies

to the cross of Christ. For, touching the first sort of men, must not they needs be counted the enemies of the cross of Christ, that in their doctrine make the cross of Christ to be of none effect? And do not they in their doctrine make the cross of Christ to be of none effect, that teach righteousness, redemption, or salvation to be any otherwise than by the only merits of Christ his cross, and faith in his blood? The apostle saith, Gal. ii. 21, ‘if righteousness be by the law,’ that is, if we may be made righteous by any work which we can do according to the law, by the fear of God, the love of God, the love of our neighbour, or anything commanded in the moral law of God, ‘then Christ died without a cause, and in vain.’ For to this end, as the apostle sheweth, Rom. viii. 3, 4, ‘God sent his Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us;’ where the meaning is, that therefore Christ was sent to fulfil all righteousness in our flesh, and to die for us, because we were unable to fulfil the law, to be made righteous by it, or to save our souls from death. For if we had been able to purchase righteousness by our own works, or to save our souls from death, then what needed Christ to have come in the flesh, or to have died for us? It had been in vain and unprofitable. They, then, that teach righteousness to be by the law, or anything that we can do, they make the death of Christ and his resurrection, his victory, his kingdom, his glory, himself, unprofitable, and of none effect, and so are enemies of the cross of Christ. So again the apostle saith, Gal. v. 4, ‘Ye are abolished from Christ, whosoever are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace;’ where the meaning is, that they are utterly void of Christ, and not in the kingdom of grace, they abolish righteousness, redemption, and salvation by

Christ, and have no part in the death and resurrection of Christ, that seek to be made righteous, or to purchase salvation by the works of the law. Whereupon again it followeth, that they that teach righteousness or salvation to be by the law, make Christ unprofitable, and abolish the merit of our redemption by his blood, and so in their doctrine are enemies unto the cross of Christ.

Will ye, then, know who they are that are the enemies of the cross of Christ at this day, that ye may not follow them, or walk as they do? Mark, then, who they are that in their doctrine are injurious to the cross of Christ. Who are they that teach, that we are justified by our own works done according to the law, and not by the alone righteousness of Christ Jesus, which he finished upon his cross? Who are they that teach that our sins are forgiven by bulls, and pardons, and pilgrimages, and not by the alone blood of Christ Jesus? Who are they that teach propitiatory sacrifices for the quick and the dead, other than that one sacrifice of Christ Jesus once offered upon the cross, whereby he hath obtained eternal redemption for us? Who are they that teach invocations unto, and intercession by, saints or angels, or any other than him that by his own blood hath entered in once unto the holy place, and is set at the right hand of God to make continual intercession for us? Mark who they be that be such, and see whether that they be not the enemies of the cross of Christ, whether any be so injurious unto the cross of Christ as they be. Oh, but some will say, that these whom I now note, be the only friends of the cross of Christ; for do not they worship the cross of Christ, even with holy worship? Do not they set it in their temples, and in the highways, and in every place bow down unto it? Do not they adorn it with gold and silver, and all costly precious stones? Do not their great ones cause it in all celebrity and pomp to be carried before them? Do they not at all times, when they come out of their houses, when they come into the churches, when they address themselves almost unto anything, sign themselves with the sign of the cross, in honour of the cross of Christ? True it is, they whom I note do thus, and yet these be they that be the enemies of the cross of Christ; for to do thus, and with these foolish outward semblances and May-games to deceive the world, is not to glory in the cross of Christ, or to be a friend of the cross of Christ; but to teach Christ Jesus purely and sincerely, to give unto Christ crucified the full and whole honour of our redemption, justification, and salvation, which they do not, this is to be a true friend of the cross of Christ, for this is to believe and know Christ crucified. There was a time, indeed, when the cross of Christ was most odious and opprobrious, and when to preach or believe in Christ crucified, was most ridiculous; and if these cross and gross idolaters had lived then, it may well be thought that they would have been cross and gross persecutors. But now when we glory in nothing more than to know

Christ and him crucified, in such pompous sort and vain gesticulations to celebrate the cross, and to detract from the merits of Christ crucified, is to be injurious unto the cross of Christ, to be an enemy of the cross of Christ. Yea, what else is such adoration and worship of the cross as they use, but most gross and impious idolatry? Take heed, therefore, of such, mark well who they be. Many such there be, but take heed and beware of them, 'for they are the enemies,' &c.

Another sort of men likewise there are, enemies unto the cross of Christ, and those are such as in their life follow after carnal delicacies, and fly persecution for the cross of Christ, for Christ crucified. Of such the apostle speaketh, where he saith, Gal. vi. 12, 'As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only because they would not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;' in which place the apostle sheweth the cause why the false teachers preached and urged circumcision and the law. And this it was: the Jews still objected both unto our Saviour Christ, and unto his apostles, that they taught things contrary to the law, and to the ordinances of Moses; for so we see it was in the accusation of our Saviour before his arraignment, Luke xxiii. 5, that he 'moved the people, teaching throughout all Judea, they meant* strange doctrine, beginning at Galilee even to this place.' It was likewise in the accusation of Stephen, when he was stoned to death, Acts vi. 14, that he preached that Jesus of Nazareth should change the ordinances which Moses gave them. And for this they were ready to kill Paul, chap. xxi. 28, that he taught, as they said, all men everywhere against the law. The false teachers, therefore, seeing that the Jews stood upon Moses and the law, and that they persecuted them that preached Christ sincerely, even to the death, joined in their preaching of Christ circumcision, and the law unto Christ, that so applying themselves unto the humour of the Jews, they might avoid persecution for the cross of Christ, or for preaching sincerely Christ crucified. And these are they that the apostle calls here the enemies of the cross of Christ, because, to please the humour of the Jews, to live at ease and pleasure, and to avoid persecution, they made merchandise of the word of God, and preached Christ not sincerely, but so as they might keep themselves without gunshot of any danger.

Will ye, then, know what other enemies there be of the cross of Christ at this day, that ye may beware also to walk as they do? Mark, then, who they are that, to avoid the danger which often followeth upon the preaching of Christ purely, fit themselves unto the humours of men, and so preach that they may please, or at least not displease. Who are they that turn with every wind, and rather than they will hazard life, goods, or name, will jump in religion just with the king, of what religion soever he be? Who are they that, to avoid, it may be, only supposed dangers, do betray

* Qu. 'the most'?—ED.

the truth of Christ Jesus, sparing to speak such things as they ought, and speaking such thing as they ought not? Who are they whose care and labour it is a great deal more to speak safely, as they think, than to speak sincerely? Many such carnal gospellers there be, of whom that of our Saviour Christ is truly affirmed, Mat. xii. 30, 'He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.' Mark them who they be, and take heed and beware of them. Walk not after their example, for they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, providing for their own security, whatsoever become of the truth of Christ Jesus.

The second thing which the apostle noteth in these many walkers, of whom he had told them often, and now told them weeping, is, that their end or reward, for a recompence of such their walking, is damnation, or destruction, if God shall not grant them grace unto repentance for such their evil walking; which branch of the apostle's reason in effect urgeth this much, that if the Philippians feared the end of those walkers, they should also fear to walk as they did, and rather walk so as they had him for an ensample. And indeed this end, as also the other properties after specified, rightly agree unto those enemies of the cross of Christ before mentioned. Hence, then, I observe what the end is of those that are enemies unto the cross of Christ, that make their god their belly, that seek the praise of men but not of God, that mind earthly things so that their delight and affections are set thereon, and generally of such ungodly walkers as walk clean otherwise than we have Christ and his holy apostles and blessed servants for an ensample: their end is, as here the apostle saith, damnation, unless the Lord grant them grace unto repentance: a sentence which, albeit, I fear to pronounce, yet when and where the Holy Ghost leadeth me therunto, I must speak, that the godly may stand in awe, and not sin, and that the ungodly of the earth may tremble, and either reform the wickedness of their ways, or else through the just judgment of God may smite their knees one against another, and be drenched up in desperation. This, then, to be the end of such, the Holy Ghost everywhere witnesseth: 'Upon the godly,' saith the prophet, Ps. xi. 7, 'the Lord shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest: this shall be their portion to drink;' 'Tophet,' saith Isaiah, chap. xxx. 33, 'is prepared of old; it is even prepared for the king,' if he be wicked; 'it is made deep and large: the burning thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a river of brimstone doth kindle it;' and in a vision, Rev. xix. 20, John saw 'the beast taken, and with him that false prophet that wrought miracles before him, whereby he deceived them that received the beast's mark, and them that worshipped his image. And both these were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone;' all which places, and many others which might be alleged to this purpose, do

evidently shew what the end is of the wicked and ungodly of the earth, be they prince or subject, pastor or people, seducers or seduced. Their end is, they shall be rooted out at the last, and turned into hell, unless by true and unfeigned repentance they prevent that judgment, the sentence whereof can never be reversed.

Whose end, then, ye fear, it behoveth you carefully to look unto it that ye walk not after their example. Consider well what hath been said touching the enemies of the cross of Christ, and mark well what shall be said touching those whose god is their belly, whose glory is to their shame, which mind earthly things. If by that which hath been said ye can despise who they be that be the enemies of the cross of Christ, or if that which shall be said shall any way design who they be whose god is their belly, whose glory is to their shame, which mind earthly things, take heed and beware that ye walk not as they do. For of this be ye sure, that the end of such is damnation and destruction. And if the cities about Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude 7, suffered the vengeance of eternal fire as well as Sodom and Gomorrah, because they, in like manner as Sodom and Gomorrah did, committed and followed strange flesh, then assure yourselves that if ye shall walk as they that are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose god is their belly, &c., ye shall also drink of the same cup that they shall drink of, even of the wine of God's wrath. Take heed, therefore, lest at any time any of you be deceived by them, and walk not in their steps, if ye will not be partakers of their judgments.

The third thing which the apostle noteth in these inordinate walkers is, that their god is their belly; whereby the apostle signifieth that they preached not Christ sincerely and purely for Christ his sake, but that they principally respected in the preaching of Christ their profit, their pleasure, their ease, being lovers of pleasures, of profit, of ease, more than lovers of God; and therefore their belly, that is their profit, their pleasure, their ease, might well be called their god, that being each man's god which he loveth and liketh best. And this branch also of the apostle's reason might well stand for a sufficient argument with the Philippians, to move them not to walk after these, but to follow him, and to walk so as they had him for an ensample. Hence, then, I observe another note of false teachers, after whose example we may not walk: if their God be their belly, so that they care more to serve their own bellies than the Lord Jesus Christ, they are false teachers, and we may not follow them. This note of false teachers our apostle also gives in his epistle to the Romans, where, having exhorted the Romans to beware of false apostles and teachers, he gives them this note to know them by, 'They that are such,' saith he, 'serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies;' that is, they seek their own gain, and preach Christ with refer-

ence to please others, and to seek their own ease, profit, and pleasure. The apostle gives likewise the same note of them, 2 Peter ii. 14, where he saith that ‘they have hearts exercised with covetousness, through covetousness making merchandise of men’s souls,’ ver. 3 : such a one was Balaam, of whom the apostle Peter thereto saith, that ‘he loved the wages of unrighteousness;’ such were those whom Isaiah, chap. lvi. 11, called ‘greedy dogs, which could never have enough;’ and such were those of whom the apostle said before, Philip. ii. 21, that ‘they sought their own, and not that which was Jesus Christ’s.’

Will ye, then, know who they are at this day that by this note may be described to be false teachers, that knowing them ye may not follow them, nor walk as they do? Mark, then, who they are that serve their own bellies more than the Lord Jesus Christ. Who are they that through covetousness would make merchandise of your souls, and speak evil of the way of truth? Who are they that for money set on sale the forgiveness of sins, and the kingdom of heaven? Who are they that under colour of long prayers devour widows’ houses; that for such and such lands, or sums of money, or relief to such and such places, will promise so many prayers for so many days or years, for you or your friends? Who are they that to maintain their triple crown maintain also the wicked stews? Who are they that make gain godliness, and do all that ever they do, in deed and in truth, for the maintenance of their state, and of their bellies? It is easily known who they be, and it is as easily hereby discerned that they are false teachers, whosoever they be. Take heed, then, and beware of them: follow them not, neither walk as they do; for howsoever they have God in their mouths, yet sound their hearts, and trace them in the paths wherein they walk, it will be found that their god is their belly, if either that be their god which they love best, or that be their belly which they measure by their pleasure, profit, and ease.

But do they alone make their belly their god? Do not all they that more seek their own than that which is Jesus Christ’s make their belly their god? Or are there not many carnal gospellers that do so? How many are there that intrude themselves into this holy calling, not with any purpose to work in the Lord his vineyard, but only to feed upon the portion of the Levites? How many are there that withdraw their shoulders from the burden as much and as often as they can, and take as little pains in this work as they can, seeking more their own ease than that which is Jesus Christ’s? How many are there that, being bewitched with the love, and troubled with the cares, of the world, are so carefully occupied about the things of this life that they intend not the work of the ministry, seeking more their own profit than that which is Jesus Christ’s? How many are there that preach Christ rather through strife and envy than of

good will, rather in hope of preferment for their pains than of any desire to gain them that hear them unto Christ, rather in any other respect almost than in an holy zeal of the glory of our God? Surely many such carnal gospellers there be, whose god is indeed their belly, which, like unto the sons of Eli, so turn aside after the love of their bellies, and of their pleasures, that either they forget, or else care not for the law of their God. But take heed and beware of them, for ye may not walk as they do.

Yea, generally, they make their god their belly, that either serve their bellies when they should serve their God, or care more for the feeding of the belly than for the knowledge of God, or so serve God as he doth serve their bellies. Look, then, well amongst you, that none of you be such as are then a-looking to your profits, or pleasures, or other things of this life, when ye should be looking unto the service of your God; that none of you be such as care more for the things of this life than for the knowledge of God’s will out of his holy word; that none of you be such as measure your service unto the Lord by his ministering unto you such things as are needful for the maintenance of this life; for such do make their god their belly, either caring more for the things of this life than for God, or else only so caring for God, as they are occasioned by the things of this life. A foul and gross idolatry, to make our bellies our God! And therefore let us take heed that neither we commit such idolatry, nor follow the example of such as commit such idolatry.

The fourth thing which the apostle noteth in these inordinate walkers is, that their glory is to their shame; whereby the apostle signifieth that the vain glory and estimation which they sought after amongst men, neglecting the true glory of Jesus Christ, should turn to their confusion and shame. Which branch also of the apostle’s reason might well serve for a sufficient reason to move the Philippians not to follow the example of these, but to follow him, and such as walked so as they had him for an ensample. Hence, then, I observe another note of false teachers and inordinate walkers, which is vainly to seek after glory and estimation amongst men, neglecting the glory of God, after whose example we may not walk, for that their glory shall be turned into shame. ‘How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another,’ saith our Saviour, John v. 44, ‘and seek not the honour that cometh of God alone?’ In which place is shewed, that this vain seeking after honour and glory amongst men is the very root of infidelity. And therefore it is said of certain chief rulers, that in a generality believed in Christ because of the miracles which he did, but not indeed truly believe, that they did not confess Christ. And the reason is added, John xii. 43, ‘For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.’ So that the ambitious seeking of praise amongst men is the very bane, in all

sorts of men, both of faith, and of every fruit thereof. And a just thing it is with God, that they which seek the praise of men, and not of God, have their praise with men, but not with God, and that with God their glory be turned into shame.

Will ye, then, know who by this note may be des-cried at this day to be false teachers, that knowing them ye may not follow them, nor walk as they do? Mark who they are that seek honour and glory amongst men, but seek not the honour that cometh of God alone. Who is it that exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped, sitting as God in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God? Who is it that is arrayed with purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, and hath a cup of gold in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication, wherewith she maketh all the nations of the earth drunk? Who is it that glorifieth herself, and liveth in pleasure, and saith in her heart, I sit, being a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no mourning? And what shall become of all this pomp and glory? Rev. xviii. 8, 'Her plagues shall come at one day, death, and sorrow, and famine; and she shall be burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God which shall condemn her.' Take heed, then, and beware how ye follow this beast, or them that have received

the beast's mark. Their glory which they seek with men they have, but their glory shall be turned into confusion and shame.

And I wish that they were the men alone that seek the praise of men, but not of God. But are there not many carnal gospellers that may be branded with that mark? Are there not many that, in a vain affectation of their own praise more than God's, study rather to speak unto the ear than unto the heart? Are there not many whose preaching standeth rather in the enticing speech of man's wisdom, than in plain evidence of the Spirit and of power? If there be any that so vainly hunt after glory, surely their glory shall vanish as smoke, and shall wither as the green herb. Take heed, therefore, and beware of them; for ye may not walk as they do.

The last thing which the apostle noteth in them is, that they mind earthly things, whereby the apostle signifieth that their study and delight, and all their affections, were set on houses, wealth, friends, commodities, and the things which are on earth, and not on the things which are above: another note of false teachers and inordinate walkers. Mark, then, and see who they are that are such, and walk not as they do, but follow the blessed apostle, and such as walk so as he did.

LECTURE LXX.

*Whose glory is to their shame, which mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven.—
PHILIP. III. 19, 20.*

WHOSE glory is to their shame. This is the fourth thing which the apostle noteth in these many and inordinate walkers of whom he had told often, and now told them weeping, that their glory is to their shame; whereby the apostle signifieth both their great vanity in seeking after honour and glory amongst men, neglecting the true glory of Christ Jesus, and likewise the end that should come of it, which is, that it should turn to their confusion and shame. They sought the praise of men in the vanity of their hearts, and not of God; but their glory in the end should turn to their shame. Which one branch of the apostle's reason might well serve for a sufficient reason to move the Philippians not to follow the example of these, but to follow him, and such others as walked so as they had him for an example. Hence, then, I observe another note of inordinate walkers, whose example we may not follow if we fear the reward of their walking; if they vainly seek after glory and estimation amongst men, neglecting the glory and honour that cometh of God alone, they are inordinate walkers, and we may not walk after them, for that the glory which such men seek shall be turned into shame. It is a general rule prescribed

unto all Christians, that in all things they should always seek the glory of the Lord, by the apostle, where he saith, 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' For, as he saith in another place, Eph. i. 11, 'We are chosen in Christ, that we should be to the praise of his glory.' Whereunto agreeth that of Peter, 1 Peter ii. 9, 'We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should shew forth the virtues of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' And a notable precedent hereof we have in the example of our Saviour, who sought not his own praise, nor the praise of men, but the praise of him that sent him, John viii. 50. But as for seeking glory and estimation amongst men, the apostle hath plainly forbid it, where he saith, Gal. v. 26 'Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.' And in another place, 1 Thes. ii. 4-6, he protesteth against it, saying, 'So we spake, not as they which please men, but God, which trieth our hearts. Neither did we ever use flattering words, as ye know, nor coloured covetousness; God is record: neither sought we praise of

men, neither of you nor of others.' Yea, and our Saviour hath noted it to be a bitter root of infidelity, or at least a great let to come unto God, where he saith, John v. 44, 'How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God alone?' How can they believe? As if he shoule have said, it is almost impossible; surely it is a very great stop and hindrance unto a man to come unto God. And the proof thereof we see in certain chief rulers of the Jews, of whom it is said, John xii. 42, 43, that 'they believed in Christ,' which was true only in a generality, 'but they did not confess him.' And the reason is added, 'For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Thus, then, we see that generally we should in all things seek the glory of God, and not vain praise and glory amongst men. So that the ambitious and vain seeking after honour and glory amongst men, neglecting the glory of God, is a plain note in all sorts of men of inordinate walking.

Now, to descend from the generality unto some particularity, did not this note, amongst others, plainly deserv those false teachers, which in St Paul's absence seduced and bewitched those churches which he had planted in the faith of Christ Jesus, to be false teachers? Their debasing and disgracing of Paul in his absence; their curious affectation of eloquence, wisdom, knowledge, and learning, as if they had all learning and all knowledge, and Paul none at all; their vain ostentation that they had been conversant with the apostles, and that they followed their footsteps; saying that Paul had not seen Christ in the flesh, nor had conversed with the apostles; their ambitious desire to please the Jews, to creep into credit with them, and to work Paul out of credit; their advancing and exalting of themselves above all others, as if they were, and none but they: what else was it but to seek their own praise, to have honour of the Jews, and to be called of them Rabbi? And what else did it but bewray them to be false teachers? Which, albeit the apostle do not in express terms utter, yet seemeth he unto me to imply so much, when he saith, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 'that his preaching stood not in the enticing speech of man's wisdom, but in plain evidence of the Spirit and of power;' and again, when he saith, 1 Thes. ii. 4, 'that he so spake, not as they that please men, but God, which trieth the hearts.' For in both these places, I take it, is signified, that they that preach in the enticing speech of man's wisdom, they that speak to please men, to be praised and had in honour of them, thereby bewray themselves to be false teachers. And it is a just thing with God, that they which seek the praise of men, and not of God, have their praise with men, but not with God; and that with God their glory be turned into their own confusion and shame, if not in this day in their own conscience, yet in that day when all faces shall gather blackness before him. For then they shall see

that all glory and honour is due unto him, that all true glory cometh from him, and then shall they be ashamed that they sought not the honour that cometh of him alone, and their shame shall be their everlasting woe and confusion.

Will ye, then, know who by this note may be despaired at this day to be false teachers, that knowing them, ye may not follow them, nor walk as they do? Mark who they are that seek honour and glory amongst men, but seek not the honour and glory that cometh of God alone. Who is it that stirs so much, that he troubles all for the chief sovereignty in earth, over all persons, in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil? Who is it that exalteth himself against all that is called God, or worshipped, sitting as God in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God? Who is it that is arrayed with purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, and hath a cup of gold in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, wherewith she makes all the nations of the earth drunk? Who is it that glorifieth herself, and liveth in pleasures, and saith in her heart, I sit, being a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no mourning? Mark, I say, and see whether this be not the false prophet that works miracles before the beast, Rev. xix. 20. Mark and see whose honour and glory it is that this false prophet and his followers seek and hunt after, God's or their own. And if by this that hath been said ye can despise who they be, then take heed and beware of them. For what shall become of all this pomp and glory which they so greedily seek after? John saith, Rev. xviii. 8, 'Her plagues shall come at one day, death, and sorrow, and famine; and she shall be burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord which shall condemn her.' And our apostle saith, 'Their glory shall be turned into shame, and their end shall be damnation.' Take heed, therefore, and beware of them; follow them not, lest, if ye be partakers in their sins, ye be partakers also of their punishment.

Now I wish that this poison had crept no farther into the church, and that they were the men alone that seek the praise of men, and not of God. But are there not some others that are tainted with this vice of vain-glory? Are there not some others that preach themselves rather than Jesus Christ? that in a vain affectation of their own praise more than God's, study rather to speak unto the ear than unto the heart? whose preaching standeth rather in the enticing speech of man's wisdom than in plain evidence of the Spirit and of power? I wish there were no such; but if there be, ye may not be followers of them; for the gospel is not delivered unto us that we should thereby seek our own praise and glory, or that the people should honour and magnify us which are the ministers thereof, but to the end that the benefit and the glory of Christ might be preached and published, and that the Father might be glorified for his mercy

offered unto us in Christ his Son, whom he hath given us, and together with him all things also. To conclude, therefore, this point in one word, we are all of us that are Christians, both pastor and people, in all things to seek the glory of God, and not of men. For if we do otherwise, and seek the glory of men and not of God, our glory shall be turned into shame.

The last thing which the apostle noteth in these many and inordinate walkers, of whom he had told them often, and now told them weeping, is that they mind earthly things; whereby the apostle signifieth that their study, delight, and all their affections were set on honours, wealth, friends, commodities, and the things which are on earth, never minding the things which are above. And here was the root of all the other evils. For why were they the enemies of the cross of Christ? Why was their belly their god? Why sought they after vain-glory and estimation in the world, and not that honour that cometh of God alone? The reason was, they minded earthly things. This is a brief comprehension of the rest, this being a certain ground of the rest, and the rest being certain notes of this. For as the cause why they were enemies to the cross of Christ, why their god was their belly, why they sought glory with men and not with God, was, because they minded earthly things; so these were evident notes to convince them that they minded earthly things, for that they were enemies to the cross of Christ, for that their god was their belly, and that they sought after the praise of men, and not of God.

Hence, then, I observe the last note of inordinate walkers, which is indeed the ground of all inordinate walking; and that is, the setting of the affections on the things which are on earth, and resting in them as in the chiefest good. ‘The desire of money,’ saith the apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 10, ‘is the root of all evil, which, while some lusted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.’ That which the apostle speaketh in particular of this one earthly desire of money, is also true in the general of all earthly desires. For the minding and desire of all earthly things is the root of all evil, whereon, when men set their affections, they err from the faith, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. So that, as the apostle reasoneth, 1 Cor. iii. 3, saying, ‘Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?’ so may I likewise reason, Is there any error in faith, or corruption in life, and is it not hence, for that they mind earthly things? Jndas, that was numbered with the apostles, and had obtained fellowship in that ministration, betrayed his master Christ Jesus. What was the cause? He bore the bag, and he loved it too well; thirty pieces of silver were the reward of his iniquity. Demas forsook Paul. What was the reason? He loved the world, and embraced it. Those ministers of the gospel, that the apostle speaketh of

in the former chapter, sought not that which was Jesus Christ’s; and what was the stop? They sought their own, their own pleasure, their own profit, their own honour, their own ease, they minded earthly things. Neither is it so only in the ministry, but generally in all sorts of men, this minding of earthly things chokes up every good thing, and inclines unto every bad thing. Those chief rulers of whom we speake before confessed not Christ; what was the cause? They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. A good confession hindered by minding an earthly thing, the praise of men. Demetrius likewise, and his company, raised a seditious tumult against Paul; what was the cause? They thought that, by his preaching, the silver temples of Diana which they made, and which brought great gains unto them, would be set at nought. A wicked sedition, raised through carnal and earthly-minded men, whose minds were so set upon their gains, that for it they could not look towards God, nor abide the ministers of Christ his gospel. And so it is generally, wheresoever the affection is set on earthly things, there their walking is inordinate, whether it be in pastor or in people. And, therefore, the apostle hath most carefully everywhere admonished us not to mind earthly things: Col. iii. 2, ‘Set not your affections on the things which are on the earth;’ and again, ver. 5, 6, ‘Mortify your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, the inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for the which things’ sakes the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.’ The like admonitions are very usual in the holy Scriptures.

Mark, then, the apostle’s rule. Ye may not walk after them which mind earthly things; and, therefore, ye may not walk after them that be the enemies of the cross of Christ. For, for this cause, they whom we have noted to be the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end we have noted to be their damnation, whose God to be their belly, whose glory to be to their shame, for this cause, I say, they were such, because they minded earthly things. Oh, but some will say, that these whom I noted to be such, are the only men, many of them, that sequestered themselves from earthly things, and have no mind of earthly things. See, then, whether that which hath been said shew not plainly that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, that their god is their belly, that they seek the praise of men more than of God. For if they be such, these are plain and evident tokens that they do mind earthly things, whatsoever be said, and whatsoever shew be made to the contrary. Neither were it otherwise hard to shew, by their whole practice, that their whole mind, and all their affections, are set on earthly things. But it shall not be needful. That which hath been said may serve to clear the point, and to be a sufficient *caveat* unto you that ye do not walk after their example. And let this be set down for a

general rule, that we may not follow their example which mind earthly things.

Yet, if our practice be looked into, it will be found that generally we follow them, and none else. For whereon else are our minds, our delight, our affections set, but on the things which are on earth? The rich man, what mindeth he but riches? the ambitious man, what but honours? the voluptuous man, what but pleasures? the dainty man, what but ease? the carnal man, what but the flesh and the lusts thereof? Generally our thoughts are earth-creeping thoughts, our desires earth-creeping desires, our actions earth-smelling actions, our ways earth-smelling ways. We think and care, some of us, how to live, some of us how to live well. But how is that? To live at ease, to swim with pleasures, to have wealth at our wills, and to leave the rest of our substance for our children. And hence it is that the voice of unmercifulness towards the poor, of deceit in buying and selling, of oppression of our brethren, of slandering one another, and stealing one from another, is heard in our streets. Hence it is that there are divisions, and dissensions, emulations, strife, envying, and the like amongst us. Hence it is that wisdom crieth without, and uttereth her voice in the streets, but no man hearkeneth, nor receiveth instruction, even because we mind earthly things, and set our affections thereon. But what saith our apostle? 'No man,' saith he, 2 Tim. ii. 4, 'that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, because he would please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier.' Now we are all of us, even so many as are baptized into the name of Christ Jesus, bidden soldiers to fight under his banner, against everything that exalteth itself against God. And our care should be in all things to please him that hath chosen us to be his soldiers. And for this cause, we should not suffer ourselves to be entangled with the affairs of this life, so that we should set our affections on the things which are on the earth. For it is the course of military discipline, that, having bidden themselves to be soldiers, they mind no more household or other ordinary affairs, but only their war. Right so should it be in the course of our Christian warfare, that, having given our names unto Christ to fight under his banner, we should not henceforth mind earthly things, but still have 'close girt unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to resist in the evil day, and having finished all things, stand fast.' The faithful minister of the gospel should not seek his own, but that which is Jesus Christ's. The faithful Christian should wean himself from the transitory things of this life, and at no hand set his affections on them.

Howbeit, let no man so understand me, as if I thought that we should not meddle with the transitory

things of this life, or have nothing at all to do with earthly things. For, no doubt, we may meddle with them, and use them, and make a godly use of them. The patriarchs and prophets, our blessed Saviour and his holy apostles, as the Scriptures bear witness, used them, and made an holy use of them. Nay, not only we may use them, and make an holy use of them, but we must count them the good blessings of almighty God, and we must take care to use them to his glory. We may not lightly regard them, or recklessly neglect them, but we must carefully husband them, and wisely employ them to our own uses, and the good of God's children. For, therefore we have them, that therewith we may do good unto all, but especially unto those that are of the household of faith; wealth, that we may help to supply the wants of our brethren; honour and might, that we may help to lift the poor out of the mire; favour and friendship, that so we may be the better able to relieve them that are oppressed; all things needful and profitable for this life, that therewith we may do good unto those that be in need or necessity, and that thereby we may glorify our Father which is in heaven. So, then, to take me as if I thought that we may not meddle with, or use earthly things and temporal blessings, were to mistake me. But this I say, with the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 31, that we must use 'them as though we used them not,' namely, so we must use them as that we be not entangled with them, nor mastered by them. We must not be 'entangled with the affairs of this life,' as the apostle speaketh, 2 Tim. ii. 4. And as the prophet, Ps. lxii. 10, saith of riches, that 'if they increase we may not set our hearts upon them,' so is it to be said in general of all earthly things, we may not set our hearts upon them. We may not, as our apostle saith elsewhere, Colos. iii. 2, 'set our affections on things which are on the earth;' and as here our apostle saith, we may not 'mind earthly things,' to set our study and our delight thereon. For, if we do, then shall we be of those many which the apostle here speaketh of, and whom he would that we should not follow; yea, if we mind earthly things, we shall fall into temptation and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction. Let us not, therefore, follow the example of them which mind earthly things, let us not set our affections on the things which are on the earth: let us use them, and let us labour to use them to God's glory, but let us not set our hearts upon them, nor suffer ourselves to be entangled with them. Let us give our hearts unto our God, let us set our affections on things which are above, and let our conversation be in heaven, which is the next point to be handled.

LECTURE LXXI.

But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ.—
PHILIP. III. 20.

FOR our conversation. This is the second reason which the apostle useth to move the Philippians to follow him, and such others as walk so as they have him for an ensample; for so it is delivered in the original as a reason ‘for our conversation,’ &c.; a reason, I say, not of that which immediately went before, but a reason of his exhortation in verse 17, where it is said, ‘Brethren, be ye followers of me,’ &c., yet so that the reason is drawn from the *antithesis* of that which went immediately before. In these words, then, we have the second reason of the apostle’s former exhortation, drawn from the *antithesis* of that which immediately went before. For as in the former reason he shewed that they were not to follow those false teachers which walked otherwise than they had him for an ensample, both by their study and by their end, which was damnation, so now he sheweth that they are to follow him, and such others as walk so as they have him for an ensample, both by the clean contrary course of study which he, and such as he is, follow, and by the contrary end, which is glorification. This, then, is the manner of the apostle’s proceeding: His exhortation is, ‘Brethren, be ye followers of me,’ &c. His reason is, for our conversation, or our city whereof we are citizens, is in heaven, not in earth, that we should mind earthly things, or make our God our belly, but in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we look for another reward of our walking than that which the wicked have, even the glorification of our vile bodies by that his powerful working, whereby he is able to subdue, &c.

In this reason, then, I note these three principal points, shewing themselves in a threefold profession, which the apostle maketh in the behalf of himself and such others as walked as he did. The first is a Christian profession of their present conversation, in these words, ‘For our conversation,’ &c. The second is a Christian profession of their expectation of Christ’s second coming to save them, in these words, ‘From whence also,’ &c. The third is a Christian profession of their certain hope of the glorification of their vile bodies by the powerful working of Christ, in these words, ‘Who shall change our vile bodies,’ &c. Now, touching their present conversation, the apostle maketh this Christian profession, our conversation is in heaven; which is as if the apostle should have said, It is not so with us as with those false teachers newly mentioned; for they, as men of this world, mind earthly things, and set their delight and affections thereon; but we carry and behave ourselves in this life as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, setting our affec-

tions on the things which are above. For so the words in the original are as if we should thus read, Our city whereof we are citizens, ἡμῶν γὰρ πολιτεύμα, and whereunto we have right, is in heaven. So that his meaning is, that they carry and behave themselves, and so converse here in this life, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, minding that, and the things which be seem that. Touching the second point, namely, their expectation of Christ his second coming to save them, the apostle maketh Christian profession, when he saith, ‘from whence,’ &c.; which is as if our apostle should have said, A reason why our conversation is in heaven is, because from heaven we certainly look and wait for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come as a swift judge against all them that have made their belly their God, but as our Saviour, to give us an inheritance among them that are saved. In the last verse, the apostle maketh a Christian profession of their certain hope of their glorification, whereof more particularly hereafter. Now let us see what observations we may gather hence for our own use and instruction.

The first thing which I note is, the apostle’s Christian profession, which he maketh in the behalf of himself, and such others as walked so as he did, touching their present life and conversation, which is, that they carried and behaved themselves in this life as citizens of heaven, setting their affections on the things which are above. Whereof the apostle maketh profession to this end, that hereby the Philippians might be induced to follow him, and such as he was, that seeing their conversation to be such and so holy in comparison of others, they might make their choice of following them, and have their conversation such as they heard and saw that theirs was. Hence, then, I observe what the life and conversation of God’s children ought to be in this vale of misery and valley of tears: we shouold carry and behave ourselves here as pilgrims here on earth, and having our city in heaven, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, fixing our faith, hope, and love there; settling our thoughts, desires, and affections there; having our hearts, minds, and wills there; and living under the laws that are given and kept there. This our apostle sheweth in the first chapter of this Epistle, where he exhorteth the Philippians, saying, Philip. i. 27, ‘Only let your conversation be (πολιτεύσθε) as it becometh the gospel of Christ;’ where the apostle useth the word whence this word here used is derived: and the exhortation implying a duty, it is as much in effect as if he had said that we ought so to walk as citizens of the saints and of the kingdom of God, holding ou in that course which be-

seemeth the profession of the gospel. The like exhortation also the apostle Peter maketh, 1 Pet. i. 15, where he saith, ‘As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.’ Which exhortation likewise implying a duty, it appeareth that our conversation should be in all holiness, as becometh the saints of God and citizens of his kingdom. But most plain to this purpose is that of our apostle, where he saith, Colos. iii. 1, 2, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on the things which are above.’ For in this place the apostle sheweth most plainly that if we be risen with Christ by the virtue of his resurrection, then we are in mind and affection, even while we are in the body, to ascend up into heaven, and even to dwell with him where he is at the right hand of God. And why should it seem strange unto any, that even while we live here in the body, we should have our conversation in the heavens? Where should the body live but where the head liveth? If, then, Christ, which is our head and our life, be in heaven, we also, which are the members of his body, should have our life in heaven, where Christ, which is our life, is. Again, where should the spouse love and like to be, but where her well-beloved bridegroom is? Her heart and her soul should be so knit unto him, as that where he is, there should she be also. Nay, our Saviour himself tells us, Mat. vi. 21, that ‘where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.’ Is then Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the treasure and joy of our souls? If he be, then where he is, there will our hearts be also.

In body, it must needs be that we walk on earth amongst the sons of men, till our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, and we be clothed with our house from heaven; but ‘hero we have no abiding city,’ Heb. xiii. 14; in token whereof, we read that the holy patriarchs dwelt in tents, counting themselves only pilgrims upon earth, and as guests in an inn for a night, and looking for ‘a city having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God.’ Nay, what else is here but a vale of misery and a valley of tears? How are we hero assaulted on every side with the world, the flesh, and the devil! How do the wicked and ungodly of the earth take secret counsel together against us, saying, Come, let us root them out, that they be no more a people, and that their name may be no more had in remembrance! How do the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, swarm like grasshoppers upon the face of the earth! How manifold are our necessities, infirmities, miseries, distresses, perils, crosses, troubles, temptations, afflictions, losses, griefs, and anguishes, both in soul and in body, while we are in the body; even such and so many, that we have great reason, with our apostle, 2 Cor. v. 4, 8, to ‘sigh whiles we are in this tabernacle, and to

desire to remove out of the body, and to dwell with the Lord.’ Seeing, then, that here we are but pilgrims and strangers, and have no abiding city, boing that here is but a vale of misery and a valley of tears, we are not here to pitch the resting-place of our souls, but, living here in the body, we are in heart and soul, in mind and affection, to have our conversation in heaven. And that so much the rather because ‘man that is born of woman is but of short continuance here on earth, and full of trouble and misery,’ Job xiv. 1. For wherein should he have joy, or peace, or comfort in the Holy Ghost; nay, how should he not be swallowed up of grief, and sorrow, and vexation of the spirit, if in soul he should not ascend into heaven, and set his affections on the things which are above? For thus it is, that though our outward man be troubled, yet our inward man is comforted; though in body we be afflicted and distressed on every side, yet in our souls we have peace and joy of the Holy Ghost, even because our conversation is in heaven, whence it is that we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen. This point might be farther enlarged. But by this it doth appear that the children of God ought in this life to have their conversation in heaven, walking as citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Will ye then see, for your farther use and instruction, what manner of persons ye ought to be in holy conversation and godliness, that, living in the body, ye may be said to walk as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and to have your conversation in heaven?

1. If we will walk in this life as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and approve ourselves to have our conversation in heaven, we may not war after the flesh, or suffer ourselves to be entangled with the affairs of this life. For these two, to mind earthly things, and to have the conversation in heaven, are, as we see in this place, so opposed the one unto the other, that the one is a plain note of inordinate walkers, and the other a sure token of our adoption into the sons of God, to be partakers of the inheritance among the saints. Whereupon it is that the apostle plainly protesteth against the one, but cheerfully professeth the other. ‘Though,’ saith he, 2 Cor. x. 3, ‘we walk in the flesh, yet do we not war after the flesh.’ And again, ‘No man,’ saith he, ‘that warreth, he meaneth to God in the spirit, and therefore the vulgar interpreter puts it into the text, ‘no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, because he would please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier,’ 2 Tim. ii. 4. And the like is very usual. But see how cheerfully he professeth in this place that his conversation is in heaven; and in another place, that his ‘house is from heaven,’ 2 Cor. v. 2; and in other places, that he ‘walks in the spirit,’ and ‘minds those things which are above.’ This one thing, then, must we care, if we will walk as citizens of heaven, that we walk not after the flesh, nor set our affections

on the earth, nor suffer ourselves to be entangled with the love of the world. For, as John saith, 1 John ii. 15, ' If any man love the world, or the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' We must therefore so use the world as though we used it not; and in no case we may so set our affections on anything in this life, that our soul should so cleave unto it as the soul of Shechem unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob ; for death will surely follow, as it did upon Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. 26.

2. If we will walk in this life as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and approve ourselves to have our conversation in heaven, we must so wrestle against all temptations, and all assaults of the devil, that, having finished all things, we may stand fast. For so shall we indeed walk as citizens of the household of God, if our case being as our apostle's was, we can say with our apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, ' We are afflicted on every side, yet are we not in distress; in poverty, but not overcome of poverty ; we are persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but we perish not.' Thus we make a good trial of ourselves, and shew plainly that we walk not as men simply, but as men of God. For it cannot be that we should not be tempted, and assaulted, that we should not have ' fightings without, and terrors within,' as the apostle professeth he had, 2 Cor. vii. 5. Nay, ' if we be without such corrections, whereof all God's children are partakers, we are bastards, and no sons,' Heb. xii. 8. But if we at such times shall take unto us the whole armour of God, if we shall gird unto us the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, as our blessed Saviour for our example did, Mat. iv., we shall be sure to quit ourselves like men, and to quench all the fiery darts of the devil. It may be indeed, that after he have fled from us by thus resisting him, he will again assault us. And so we see he did with our blessed Saviour in the place mentioned. He left him not with once or twice, but again, and again, and again he tempted him. We must then, as he did, still resist him, and still fight against him with the sword of the Spirit. So shall we fight with Michael, and Michael shall fight with us against the dragon, and we shall prevail ; for ' in that he was tempted, he is able, and will also succour them that are tempted,' Heb. ii. 18. This, then, must be another care that we must take, if we will walk as citizens of heaven, that in all temptations and troubles whatsoever we may stand fast ; for so shall we be good citizens indeed, if whatsoever battery be laid against us, still we stand upon our guard, and hold out every enemy.

3. If we will walk in this life as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and approve ourselves to have our conversation in heaven, we must yield ourselves to be guided and governed by the laws of that city, and to live in all obedience unto those laws which are given and kept there ; for every citizen is to be governed by the laws of his city, and to yield all obedieue

thereunto. As, then, the angels in heaven are always ready to obey and execute his will, going when he biddeth, and returning when he calleth, so we, as dutiful and obedient children, should with all willingness and cheerfulness apply ourselves unto his sacred will, never attempting anything contrary thereunto. For if, when he sets it down as a law that we fly that which is evil, and do that which is good, &c., we contrariwise fly that which is good, and follow that which is evil ; we are no more citizens, but plain rebels ; we have no conversation in heaven, but we plainly fight against heaven and against God. This must be a third care that we must take, if we will walk as citizens of heaven, that we yield ourselves to be governed by the laws of that city, and live in all obedience under those laws which the King of heaven hath given, and commanded to be kept. Otherwise how can we say that our conversation is in heaven, if we submit not ourselves unto the laws, and conform our lives unto the will of our Father which is in heaven ?

4. And, lastly, if we will walk in this life as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and approve ourselves to have our conversation in heaven, we must in heart, in mind, and in soul ascend up thither ; our thoughts, our desires, and our affections must be settled there, our faith, hope, and love must be rooted and grounded there. By faith we must always be looking unto Christ Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, where he is set at the right hand of the throne of God. In hope, we must always wait for that inheritance immortal, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. In love, we must always be fast tied unto him who is love itself, ' whom we have not seen, and yet love him ; and in whom now, though we see him not, yet do we believe, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious.' Our affections must always be set on the things which are above ; our desires must always run on the things that belong unto our peace ; our thoughts must always be musing of the judgments of his mouth ; our hearts must always be lift up unto the Lord ; our souls must there always repose themselves, where true joys are to be found. And our minds must always be occupied in the meditation of those joys which are prepared to be shewed in the last time. For thus, though we be absent in body from the Lord, yet even whiles we are in the body, we are and dwell with the Lord. And unless we thus be and dwell with the Lord, we cannot say that our conversation is in heaven, no more than we can say that our hearts cleave stedfastly unto the Lord, when they are set on riches, and on the pleasures of this life.

Now, then, that ye see that ye ought to have your conversation in heaven, and likewise how to walk to have your conversation in heaven, it behoveth you, men and brethren, to look unto it whether your conversation be such as it ought, and whether it be where

it ought to be. Look unto the earth, how ye are minded towards earthly things; look unto the temptations of this life, how fast ye stand agaist them; look unto the law and will of God, how ye conform yourselves unto it; look unto the things which are above, how in heart and soul ye are affected toward them, and hereby try whether ye can say with the apostle, ‘Our conversation is in heaven.’ If thou hast so used the things of this life, as that thou hast not too too much loved the world, nor the things that are in the world; if thou hast manfully resisted the temptations of this life, and overcome them; if in holy obedience thou hast conformed thy life unto the will of thy God; if, being absent in body from the Lord, thy soul and thine affections have been set on the things which are above, where true joys alone are to be found: what a comfort may it be unto thy soul to have such a testimony that thy life and conversation hath been in heaven! Oh but here, will the good soul say, I mean the troubled and afflicted soul, True, indeed, I might be comforted if I found it thus with me. But thus it is with me: though I have not wholly minded earthly things, yet have I minded them more than I should; though I have withstood such temptations as have assaulted me, yet in great weakness; though I have delighted in the law of the Lord, yet have I often turned out of the way of his commandments; though I have affected the things which are above, yet have mine affections been too much divided between the things which are above, and the things which are on earth. Well, let not thy soul be troubled nor feared. Dost thou see, and know, and acknowledge thus much? David saith, Ps. xxxii. 5, that he ‘confessed his sin unto the Lord, and so he forgave the punishment of his sin.’ Fear not, then, but that he who hath opened thine eyes to see, and thy heart to acknowledge thy weakness and imperfection, will pardon this weakness and imperfection, whatsoever it is. Again, feelest thou some seeds, some beginnings of these things in thee? Who is it that hath sown and begun these things in thee? Even that God that hath said, ‘I will not fail thee nor forsake thee,’ and therefore will perform that good work which he hath begun in thee until the day of Jesus Christ, and will cause those holy seeds to bring forth their fruit in due season. Yea, comfort thyself herein, if it be with thee as thou sayest, that thy conversation hath been in heaven. For art thou sorry that thou hast more minded earthly things than thou shouldest; that temptations have so nighly surprised thee; that thou hast so often turned aside from the law of thy God; that thine heart and affections of thy soul have been more divided twixt heaven and earth than they should? And dost thou desire in thy soul daily more and more to be weaned from minding earthly things, to be strengthened against temptations, to be conformed in thy will unto God’s will, and to walk with thy God with a perfect heart? This, also,

is a sure token that thy conversation is in heaven; for where the perfection of that which should be is wanting, there an holy desire and affection unto that which should be is accepted. If, therefore, in searching out thy heart and thy reins for the trial of these points, thou find it to be with thee as thou sayest, thou hast great cause of comfort and joy in the Spirit.

But if in trial it appear that, as thou hast lived in the flesh, so thou hast walked after the flesh, neglecting the law of God, yielding thyself captive unto the law of sin, setting thine affections on the things which are on earth, and never minding the things which are above; then surely thou art a stranger from the life of God, and the way that thou walkest leadeth unto hell. Look, therefore, well unto it, and let every man have that care of his ways, that howsoever he live here in the body, yet in mind and affection he may have his conversation in heaven. And to this end, wean yourselves daily more and more from the love and care of these earthly things: ‘He that weepeth,’ through adversity, ‘let him be as though he wept not; he that rejoiceth,’ through prosperity, ‘let him be as though he rejoiced not; he that buyeth, as though he possessed not; he that useth this world, as though he used it not: for the fashion of this world goeth away,’ 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31, and all things in the earth are but mere vanity. Take unto yourselves the whole armour of God, wrestle harder and harder daily against all temptations and assaults of the devil, fight a good fight, stand fast, quit yourselves like men, resist the devil, and he will fly from you. Conform your wills daily more and more unto God’s will, yield yourselves daily more and more to be governed by his laws, order your steps so here in his ways, as having right unto that city, whereof also ye shall have possession. And though ye live here in the flesh, yet ascend in heart, in mind, and in soul into heaven; let your thoughts, and desires, and affections be settled there; your faith, your hope, and your love, let them be rooted and grounded there. And, then, amongst other benefits, this shall not be the least, that death shall not come hastily upon you, yea, ye shall cheerfully think upon death, death shall be unto you an advantage; and when the will of God is, ye shall desire to be loosed and to be with Christ, to remove out of the body, and to dwell with the Lord. For what is the cause why we so fear death, why we are so loath to die? Here it is: because in the days of our flesh we have not had our conversation in heaven. Our minds were set upon earthly things, and therefore we are loath to part with them. We never fought against any temptation, nay, the strong man possessed us in such peace, that we never knew what temptation meant, and therefore we knew not where to live better than here. We regarded not to submit ourselves to the laws of God, to be governed by them, and therefore we shrink at death for fear of a judgment. We never ascended into heaven in our hearts or souls, we

never raised our thoughts, our desires, or our affections so high, we never tasted in ourselves any sparkle of those joys which are prepared to be shewed in the last time, and therefore we long not after heaven, but we rather love to live here on earth. These are the things, I say, that make us shrink at death, and loath to die. Let us, then, hearken unto these words of exhortation, and let us have our conversation in heaven. If we shall, then shall death be welcome unto us, and we shall accept it as the end of our pilgrimage, and as the way to our abiding city Jerusalem, which is above, and unto Christ which is our life. For the more we ascend while we are in the body, in our souls and spirits, in our meditations and desires, in faith and hope, into heaven, the more will we desire to remove out of the body, that we may for ever dwell with the Lord, and therefore we will the more cheerfully open unto death when he knocks at our doors. I hear that the example of this our sister may be a good provocation to stir you up unto these things; for they that were with her give her this testimony, that in this time when the Lord had laid his

hand upon her, she quickly set apart all mind of earthly things, patiently submitted herself unto the will of the Lord, willingly set her affections on the things which are above, and desired nothing more than to hear and think of her Lord and God, her Saviour and Redeemer. I beseech almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that both her example, and the words which ye have heard this day with your outward ears, may so prevail with you, that in this life ye may walk as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, having your conversation in heaven, weaning yourselves from the world, and the things that are in the world, manfully fighting against all temptations and assaults of the devil, conforming yourselves in all obedience unto the laws of his kingdom, and while ye live here in the body, climbing up into heaven, that when death comes, and ye must remove out of the body, ye may dwell for ever with the Lord, and be received into the full possession of that inheritance immortal, and undefiled, which is reserved in heaven for you!

LECTURE LXXII.

*From whence also we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, &c.—
PHILIP. III. 20, 21.*

FROM whence. This is the second Christian profession which the apostle maketh in behalf of himself, and such others as walked as he did, and it is of their expectation of Christ his second coming to save them; which also yieldeth a reason why they have their conversation in heaven. ‘Our conversation,’ saith the apostle, ‘is in heaven.’ And why so? From heaven we certainly look and wait for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come as a swift judge against all them that have made their belly their god, but as our Saviour, to give unto us an inheritance among them that are saved; therefore our soul-conversation is in heaven, where now Christ is, and whence he shall come in that day to save us. In that the apostle saith ‘from whence,’ he noteth the place whence Christ his second coming shall be, and consequently the place where now he is according to his humanity; for there now he is whence at that day he shall come, sitting now in glory at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, whence he shall also come in glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Again, in that he saith, ‘from whence also we look for the Saviour,’ he signifieth their patient expectation and waiting for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation; for Christ being then already descended from the bosom of his Father, and having offered up himself without spot unto God, to take away the sins of such his chosen children as, through faith in his

blood, have their consciences purged from dead works to serve the living God; now they waited and looked for the promise of his second coming, when he should come in the clouds, to be glorified in his saints, but to render vengeance unto them that know not God, nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, in that he saith, ‘from whence also we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ,’ he noteth the person of him whose second coming from heaven in the clouds they waited and looked for, which is the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour. The *Lord*, who is to be feared, having all sovereign power given unto him in heaven and in earth. The *Lord Jesus*, who is to be feared and loved, having laid down his life for us to save us from our sins, and to free us from condemnation, the due desert of our sin. The *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is to be feared, loved, and reverenced, having, as our priest, reconciled us unto God, and as our prophet instructed us in the will of God. Unto all which the apostle addeth this, that further he calleth him *the Saviour*, for that then in his second coming he should not only save them, and free them from sin and condemnation, which he did at his first coming in his humility, but should save them and free them from death and corruption, and bring them into the full possession of that inheritance purchased in heaven for them. So that ye see the general point here spoken of is Christ his second coming in glory: the particular points are, the place whence the second coming

shall be, the patient expectation and waiting of the faithful for the second coming, and the person of him that shall come in this second coming, which the faithful so look for. Now let us see what notes and observations we may gather hence, whereof to make some further use and instruction for ourselves.

The first thing which I note is the apostle's Christian profession, which he maketh in behalf of himself, and such others as walked so as he did, touching the place whence they waited for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. They looked for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, where they had set their affections, where they had their soul-conversation. Hence, then, I observe a ground of that point of an article of our faith, wherein we believe that Christ shall come from heaven with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whereunto also the Scriptures give witness often elsewhere; as where the angels told the apostles, saying, Acts i. 11, 'This Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as ye have seen him go into heaven;' and again, where the apostle saith, 1 Thes. iv. 16, that 'the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God;' and again, where our Saviour himself tells his disciples, Mat. xxiv. 30, that 'the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.' But what needeth further proof of this point? It is a thing which we all believe and confess, that Christ being ascended into heaven, where he sitteth at the right hand of the throne of God, shall come again from heaven in his appointed time with power and great glory, so that every eye shall see him, yea, even they which pierced him through, and shall render unto every man according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil. The uses which we are to make hereof are these.

First, to beware of such false teachers as tell us that the body of Christ is not only in heaven, but in earth also, in every kingdom, in every city, in every parish, in every loaf, in every piece of bread and cup of wine where the sacrament is received. For do we look that he shall come from heaven the second time with power and great glory? And shall we not think that now he is there, whence then he shall come? True it is that Christ, as he is God, is not in heaven alone, or limited unto any place, but filleth all places, being infinite and incomprehensible. But as he is man, so is he there alone whence he shall appear the second time unto salvation, for so it is written, Acts iii. 21, that 'the heavens must contain him until the time that all things be restored.' And what else is it but to destroy the nature of a true body, to say that it may be in divers places at one time? Let this for this time suffice us: we look for Christ as he is man from heaven, therefore as he is man he is in heaven; the heaven must contain him till all things be restored, therefore he is alone in heaven; he hath a true body, therefore he cannot be in divers places at once. Be-

ware therefore of such deceivers, that ye give no place unto their error, and trust perfectly that Christ sitteth at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, having no corporal presence elsewhere, and that from thence he shall come to render vengeance unto the wicked, and to be glorified in his saints.

Secondly, this should teach us to beware of such mockers as walk after their lusts, and say, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' The Holy Ghost hath said it, that 'he shall come from heaven the second time with power and great glory.' And hath he said it, and shall it not come to pass? 'It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,' Acts i. 7. Nay, Christ himself saith, Mat. xxiv. 36, 'Of that day and hour' when he shall come 'knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but God only.' Nay, Christ himself, as he is man, knoweth it not. We know perfectly, 1 Thes. v. 2, which is enough for us to know, that 'the day of the Lord shall come even as a thief in the night.' Now, if the good man of the house knew at what watch the thief would come, he would surely watch 'for that time,' Mat. xxiv. 43, but would be very secure for other times. It is enough, therefore, for us to know that he shall come. And this, that we know that he shall come, but know not the time when, should exercise our faith and patience, bridle our curiosity, and contain us in the fear of God, in godliness, and in all watchfulness at all times, lest he come upon us at unawares, and find us without oil in our lamps, either beating our fellow-servants, or eating and drinking with the drunken, or running after noisome lusts and the foolish cares of this life. 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is patient towards us, and would have all men to come to repentance,' 2 Pet. iii. 9. 'Yet a very little while,' saith the apostle, Heb. x. 37, 'and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' Beware, therefore, of such mockers as in scorn and derision say, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' Watch ye, and pray continually, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all the things that shall come to pass upon such mockers, and that ye may stand before the Son of man.

The third use which we are to make hereof, and whereat our apostle especially aimeth, is, that hence we should learn to have our conversation in heaven. For do we look that the Saviour shall come the second time from heaven? Great reason, then, that we should have our conversation in heaven; that in heart, mind, and soul we should ascend thither; that our faith, hope, and love should be rooted there; that our thoughts, desires, and affections should be settled there. Had Daniel reason to open his windows towards Jerusalem, Dan. vi. 10, and to pray towards it three times a day, because of God's promise unto his people when they should pray toward that temple? And is there not far greater reason for us that we

should always lift up our hearts unto the Lord, and have our soul-conversation in heaven, from whence we do look for our blessed Saviour? The children of light herein may learn a lesson of the children of this world, and of the children of darkness; for where is the merchant's mind, but where his goods are, and where he hopes for commodity? Where is the husbandman's heart, but on his harvest, and where he looks for the fruit of his labours? Where are the affections of the voluptuous or ambitious man set, but where the things are which their soul most desireth? Where else, then, should the Christian man's conversation be, but in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ? Let us not, then, with Reuben, and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, desire to tarry on this side Jordan, without the land of promise, but let us go into the heavenly Canaan, and dwell there, and walk as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. If we connt that we have our treasure in heaven, let us also have our hearts in heaven; otherwise we shew plainly that we have not our treasure in heaven. For, as our Saviour tells us, Mat. vi. 21, 'where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.' There Christ is, thence we look for the Saviour; therefore, even while we are at home in the body, let us have our soul-conversation there in heaven, where he dwelleth, and whence we look for him.

The second thing which I note is in the person of the apostle, and others like unto himself. For here ye see that the apostle, in behalf of himself and such others as walked so as he did, professeth that they looked for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, which their expectation plainly argued the fervent desire and earnest longing which they had for the appearing of Christ the second time unto salvation. Whence I observe the gladsome expectation of the faithful children of God for the second coming of Christ, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, to judge both the quick and the dead. They look and wait for it, their souls long after it, and with lift-up hearts and voices they cry, and say, 'How long, Lord, holy and true; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' It is said in the epistle to the Romans, that 'the fervent desire of the creature waiteth when the sons of God shall be revealed,' Rom. viii. 19. The word signifieth an earnest waiting of the creature, such as is the waiting of them that are set in a watch-tower, to desery when the sons of God shall be revealed, *i.e.* when it shall be manifestly known, not only unto themselves by faith, but unto men and angels, that they are the sons of God. For, as John speaketh, 1 John iii. 2, 'Now we are the sons of God, but yet it doth not appear what we shall be; and we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' And as our apostle speaketh, Col. iii. 3, 'When Christ which is our life appeareth, then shall we also appear with him in glory.' For then shall he change our vile body, that

it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. So that the time for which the creature waiteth is the second coming of Christ. Deth, then, the creature, even the heaven and the earth which God created in the beginning, wait with such a fervent desire, that they sit as it were in a watch-tower, continually beholding when Christ shall appear the second time unto salvation? How great, then, and gladsome, may we imagine the expectation of the faithful children of God to be for the second coming of Christ, when they shall not only be renewed, as the creature, but have a full complement of everlasting blessedness! And therefore the apostle addeth, Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only the creature, but we also; yea, we much more, which have received the first fruits of the Spirit, even we do sigh in ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body,' *i.e.* waiting for the consummation of our adoption and redemption, when we shall fully possess our inheritance with the saints in heaven. This the apostle commended in the Corinthians, 1 Cor. i. 7, that they waited for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. And likewise in the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 10, that they looked for the Son of the living and true God from heaven. And this is a thing which should be commended in us all. 'For the grace of God, which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, and teacheth us that we should deny ungodliness,' &c., 'looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the almighty God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ,' Tit. ii. 12, 13. Again, we, I say, much more, because the creature only waiteth that it may not afterwards be subject unto corruption or vanity; but the faithful that they may also judge the wicked, and reign with him for ever and ever. Neither only doth this comparison with the expectation of the creature, shew what the expectation of the faithful is for the second coming of Christ; but much more will it appear if we shall compare it with the long-wished and most desired first coming of Christ in the flesh, to destroy sin in the flesh. We read how greatly the patriarchs, and prophets, and holy saints of God in the Old Testament desired, and longed for that Seed of the woman, that Star of Jacob, that Prince of peace, that righteous Branch, that Emmanuel. Our blessed Saviour himself testifieth of Abraham, John viii. 56, that he rejoiced to see his day, *i.e.* the time wherein he came in the similitude of sinful flesh; and he saw it, saith he,—namely, with the eye of faith,—and was glad. And in another place, Luke x. 24, he tells his disciples that 'many prophets and kings had desired to see those things which they saw, and had not seen them; to hear those things which they had heard, and had not heard them.' And that good old Simeon notably expressed his great desire which he had to see Christ in the flesh, when, taking him in his arms, he praised God, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, accord-

ing to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,' &c., Luke ii. 29-31. Was his first coming so much expected and desired by them then, and shall we think that his second coming is not much more desired by the faithful now? It was joyful, no doubt, to see him come in the flesh; but shall it not be much more joyful to see him come in glory? It was joyful to the shepherds, and to the wise men of the east, to see the babe with Mary his mother, and Joseph; but shall it not be much more joyful to see him attended upon with ten thousands of saints and angels? Joyful to have the earnest of our salvation; but shall not the inheritance of it be much more joyful? Joyful to have the sting of death and the victory of the grave taken away; but shall not the utter exemption from death and corruption be much more joyful? Then shall the sheep be gathered into the fold, never to be in danger of the wolf, or of wandering; then shall the corn be gathered into the barn, never to be shaken with the wind, or mingled with the chaff again; then shall there be a perpetual Sabbath, and no work-day after it; an everlasting jubilee, when all bondage shall cease; then shall all tears be wiped from all eyes, no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain shall be, but peace, and gladness, and joy, such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man. This is the expectation of the faithful, which maketh them to look and long for the blessed appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now see the reason why the faithful look and long for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now they are pilgrims, then they shall come to an abiding city; now they are compassed with sorrows, then shall all tears be wiped from their eyes; now they are in continual fight, then shall every enemy be subdued unto them; now they are absent in body from Christ, then shall they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; now they know, and love, and believe in part, then that which is in part shall be abolished; now they walk by faith, then shall they walk before the throne and before the Lamb for evermore; then shall be the day of their glorification, the day of their redemption, the day of their salvation, the day of their absolute consummation of all blessedness. This is the cause why their minds are ever running, their thoughts ever musing, their eyes ever looking, their souls ever longing after the second coming of Christ Jesus in glory. And for this cause they even reach after it, crying with the souls under the altar, 'How long, Lord, holy and true!'

But as for the wicked and ungodly of the earth, it is not so with them. They do fear and tremble at the remembrance of it. If they do but hear of it, their countenance is changed, their thoughts are troubled, so that the joints of their loins are loosed, and their knees smite one against another, as we read of Belshazzar, Dan. v. 6, when he saw the palm of the hand that wrote upon the wall. Yea, so far are they

from looking and longing after that day, that either they wish it might not be at all, or else that it might be deferred. And no marvel, for then shall the Lord come as a swift judge against them in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them which shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; then shall the wrath of the Lord so fiercely persecute them, that they shall cry unto the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who may stand? Then shall they hear that fearful sentence pronounced against them, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels;' and then shall they be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where they shall be tormented even day and night for evermore; not for a thousand or a hundred thousand years, but for evermore. This is the cause why they fear and tremble at every mention of that day, and for this cause they wish they might never see it.

Examine, then, yourselves, men and brethren, how ye stand affected towards the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ at that day, whether ye look and long for it, or ye tremble and fear at the mention of it: 'Blessed are all they that wait for the Lord,' saith the prophet, Isa. xxx. 18; for 'unto them that look for him shall he appear,' as saith the apostle, Heb. ix. 28, 'the second time unto salvation.' Is the message, then, of Christ his second coming gladsome unto you? Is the remembrance of it joyful unto you? It is a sure token unto you that ye belong unto Christ Jesus, and it is a notable fruit and effect of your faith and hope in Christ Jesus. It may be that some of you, looking more upon yourselves and your own sins than upon Christ and the bowels of his mercies, and being more sharp and severe toward yourselves than quick-sighted to look toward Christ Jesus, may feel some appalling in yourselves, or at least not that cheerfulness in expectation that should be. But let not your hearts be troubled, nor fear. Ye look not only upon your sins, or so on Christ as only a severe judge, and so despair in yourselves, and utterly abhor his coming; but ye look for him, though not without hope, yet without that cheerfulness which ye ought. In this weakness the Lord will perfect his praise, and unto these beginnings he will give a good issue. Only let my counsel be acceptable unto you; turn away your eyes from yourselves, and cast them upon Christ Jesus. He shall be your judge that is your Saviour. He hath bid you look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near. And he hath said it, John v. 24, that 'he that believeth in him hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death unto life.' Wait therefore patiently and cheerfully for the Lord, 'for the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all,' &c., Titus ii. 13.

The third and last thing which here I note is, in the person of him whom the apostle saith that they look for from heaven, which is ‘the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour;’ wherein I observe a reason both why we should walk in this life as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, having our conversation in heaven, and why we should look and long for the second coming unto judgment. For why should it seem strange unto any man that, living here in the body, we should have our soul-conversation in heaven? Is not our Lord and King, mighty in power to save and defend us, and to revenge us of our enemies, in heaven? Is not our Jesus, who, not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, hath saved us, by the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, in heaven? Is not our Christ, the mediator of the new testament, that hath reconciled us unto God, maketh continual intercession for us, and teacheth us outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit, in heaven? Is not our Saviour, who in that day shall make up the full complement of our salvation, in heaven? Where, then, should our conversation be but in heaven? Where should the body be but where the head is? Where should the spouse be but where the bridegroom is? Not one of us all but we are stung with fiery serpents, cursed sins and noisome lusts, which fight against the soul. If we will be healed and live, we must look up unto the brazen serpent, lift up for that purpose. In heaven is our brazen serpent, even the Lord Jesus Christ. We must, therefore, while we are in the body, lift up our eyes unto him, and have our soul-conversation in heaven, if now we will be healed of our infirmities, and if, when we remove out of the body, we will dwell with the Lord. And as this should be a sufficient reason to move us to have our

whole conversation in heaven, so should it also move us to look and long for the second coming unto judgment. For shall our Lord and King come, which shall tread down the devil and all enemies under his feet, and leading captivity captive, shall make us to triumph in the heavenly places? Shall our Jesus come, then, to be our judge, that first came to save his people from their sins? Shall our Christ come, that offered himself upon the cross for us, and opened his Father’s will unto us? Shall our Saviour come to save us from death and corruption by glory, which first saved us from sin and condemnation by grace? What cause, then, have we to hearken unto the counsel of James, chap. v. 7, exhorting to be patient unto the coming of the Lord; yea, what cause to cry with the souls under the altar, Rev. vi. 10, ‘How long, Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ Yea, to cry with John, Rev. xxii. 20, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!’ Unto this which hath been taught the example of our brother lying here before us may, as I hear, be a good provocation. Myself knew him not, and therefore I can say the less of him; but by the report of them that knew him, he was very studious, and for his time had profited well in the knowledge of such arts as he applied himself unto. He was also, as I hear, religiously affected and godly minded, having in good measure, while he was in the body, his conversation in heaven; and in the time of his sickness willingly submitted himself unto the will of his God, as one that looked for the blessed hope and appearing of the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom his soul rejoiced, and in the merits of whose death and passion his heart was comforted. The Lord grant that we may all live in his fear and die in his favour!

LECTURE LXXIII.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, &c.
—PHILIP. III. 21.

IT remaineth now that we proceed unto the third and last branch, where the apostle, in the behalf of himself and such others as walked as he did, maketh Christian profession of their certain hope of the glorification of their vile bodies by the powerful working of Christ Jesus, set down in these words, ‘who shall change,’ &c. They had their conversation in heaven, looking for the Saviour from heaven, even the Lord Jesus Christ; and from heaven they looked for the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that then he should change their vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body, &c.

The general point, then, here spoken, is the glorification of our vile bodies in the day of Christ, by the power of Christ. The particular circumstances which here the apostle noteth are these: 1. *Who* shall glorify

us, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘who shall change,’ &c. 2. *What* he shall glorify in us, namely, our bodies, whose soul-conversation hath been in heaven. 3. The condition of our bodies, what now they are, namely, bodies of vileness, baseness, and abjectness; i.e. vile, base, and abject bodies, subject to corruption, sin, and all kind of vanity. 4. The time when he shall glorify our vile bodies, namely, in that day when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge both the quick and the dead, which I note out of this that he saith, ‘who shall change;’ to wit, in that day when he shall come from whence they look for him. 5. The manner how he shall then glorify our vile bodies, namely, not by changing the substance of our bodies in the form, or feature, or lineaments, or members of them, but by changing our vile bodies;

i.e. our bodies which were created of God holy and good, but are now defiled with our vileness, by changing these vile bodies, and fashioning them in quality like unto his own glorious body, so that of mortal they become immortal, of corruptible incorruptible, of natural spiritual, of weak glorious. 6. And, lastly, the means whereby he shall thus glorify our vile bodies, namely, by that divine power and effectual working whereby he raised his own body from the grave, and whereby he is able to do what he will, even to subdue all things unto himself. These be the particular circumstaunes of this third branch of the apostle's reason. Which noting of them in this sort that we have done, may serve also for the explanation and opening of the meaning of these words. Let us now, therefore, see what profitable notes we may gather hence for our farther use and instruction.

The first thing which I note is, who it is that shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, which is, the Lord Jesus Christ. The observation then hence is, that after we have slept in the dust, Christ Jesus shall raise us again by his power, and make our vile bodies like to his glorious body. He it is, that, being one God with the Father from before all beginnings, in the beginning of time created us, formed us, and made us, and breathed into us the breath of life, and made us living souls. 'All things,' saith John, 'was made by it.' chap. i. 3, namely by the incarnate Word of God, by the everlasting Son of the Father, 'and without it was made nothing that was made.' And the apostle saith, Col. i. 16, that by the Son of God 'were all things created which are in heaven and in earth, things visible and invisible;' by him, I say, not only as an instrument, but as an efficient cause; for, as the apostle saith, Rom. xi. 36, 'of him, and through him, and for him are all things.' He likewise it is that in the fulness of time came into the world, to redeem them which were under the law, and to save his people from their sins. 'When the fulness of time was come,' saith the apostle, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law.' And again, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This a true saying, and by all means worthy to be received, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;' and therefore was his name called Jesus, 'because he should save his people from their sins,' Mat. i. 21. He also it is that in the end of times shall raise our bodies out of the dust, and make them like unto his glorious body. 'For the hour shall come,' saith John, chap. v. 28, 29, 'in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice; and they shall come forth that have done good unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation.' And in the chapter following, chap. vi. 54, 'Whosoever eateth my flesh,' saith Christ, 'and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the

last day; and our apostle in this place, 'from heaven we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body,' &c. So that he that in the beginning of time created us and made us, and in the fulness of time redeemed and saved us, shall also in the end of time raise us up out of the dust of death, and glorify us with himself. Whereof also he gave us a sure testimony when he raised up himself from the dead, no more to return unto the grave; and therefore the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 14, 'He which hath raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus, and set us with the saints.'

Let this, then, serve to confirm and strengthen us in the point of our resurrection and glorification. Christ Jesus hath taken it upon him that he will raise us up at the last day, and glorify us with himself. Let us, then, lie down in peace, and commit that to him, and he shall bring it to pass; for is the glory and strength of Israel as a man that he should lie? Hath he said it, and shall it not be done? Let the Sadducees deny the resurrection; let the philosophers and disputers of Athens mock at Paul when they hear him preach the resurrection, Acts xvii. 13; let the profane atheist scoff and jest at the resurrection of the dead, and their glorification with the saints; yet let us with Martha know that our brethren and we shall rise at the last day. He that raised the ruler's daughter from death to life in the house, Mat. ix. 25; he that raised the widow's son from death unto life, as they were carrying him out to be buried, Luke vii. 15; he that raised up Lazarus from death unto life, having lain four days in the grave, John xi. 44, shall also raise us up, and shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Let us, therefore, hold fast this hope unto the end without wavering, and let us lay this upon Christ Jesus, who will surely do it, and will not fail.

The second thing which I note is, the time when Christ shall change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body. The time is in that day when the faithful look that he shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge both the quick and the dead; which I gather from this that he saith, 'who shall change,' &c., joined with that he had said before, 'from whence also we look,' &c.; for the meaning is, that from heaven they look for the second coming of Christ, who then in his second coming shall change, &c. The observation, then, hence is, that in the last day, when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead, then shall he raise up the bodies of them that have slept in the dust, and glorify them with his own self; which point of the time of our second resurrection and glorification of our bodies, the Holy Ghost often precisely noteth; as where it is said, John v. 28, 'The hour shall come in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,' &c.; and again, chap. vi. 54, where Christ saith, 'I will raise him up at the last day'; and again, where the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 'that

they that are of Christ, at his coming shall rise again ;' and again where he saith, ver. 51, 52, ' we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.' All which places plainly shew the time of the resurrection, and of the glorification of our bodies, to be in the last day, at the second coming of Christ unto judgment. In the mean time, they shall sleep in the dust, and make their beds in the grave ; they shall ' say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister,' Job xvii. 14.

This should teach us patiently, with the faithful children of God, to wait and look for the second coming of Christ Jesus, yea, even to long and reach after it, because then these cracked and frail vessels shall be in better case than now they be. Now they are vile, and rotten, and naught, but then shall they be changed, and be made like unto Christ his glorious body ; and then shall they be united to the souls, to receive that blessed inheritance which God the Father of old hath prepared, God the Son of late hath purchased, and God the Holy Ghost doth daily seal in the hearts of God's children. That is the time for our full deliverance, our full redemption, when all things shall be subdne under him ; and till that time, after that death once destroy these bodies, the grave shall be our house, and we shall make our bed in the dark.

The third thing which here I note is, what it is that Christ in that day shall raise up again, and glorify, namely, ' our vile body ;' whence my first observation is, that since sin entered into the world, and death by sin, such is the condition of our bodies here, that they be vile, subject to all infirmities, miseries, mortality, corruption, and all kind of vanity ; the experience whereof is so common, and so well known unto us all, that it shall not be needful to prove it unto any of us. How many aches, infirmities, diseases are we troubled withal in our bodies ! What wounds, and swellings, and soros, full of all manner of corruption, are our bodies subject unto ! What labours, what perils, what watchings, fastings, cold, nakedness, im-prisonments, how many kinds of deaths are they subject unto ! How soon are they cut down like grass ! How soon do they wither as the green herb ! How soon do they return unto the dust whence they first came ! Or what privilege here have the bodies of them that come of noble houses, of honourable parents, of the blood royal ? None at all ; but their bodies are as vile, as here the apostle meaneth, as subject to dis-eases, as needing all helps for health, as unable to endure labour, heat, cold, hunger, thirst, as unable to want sleep, rest, food, apparel, as soon cut down by the hand of death, as soon devoured by the worms, as soon turned unto the dust, as the bodies of other men. And therefore our bodies, without exception in the Holy Scriptures, are called and likened unto grass, the flower of the field, to earthen vessels, to earthly houses, to tabernacles, to dust and ashes, &c. ; 1 Pet. i. 24,

' All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass : the grass withereth, and the flower falleth away.' Yea, look what Job's body was, that all our bodies are, if the Lord shall lay his hands upon them ; yea, this shall be the state of our bodies to be thus vile, as the apostle speaketh, till they be changed, and made like unto his glorious body.

This should teach us to pluck down our sails, and to abate the great daintiness of our bodies whereunto we are grown. Such silks and velvets, such ruffs and lawns, such frizzing and painting, such chains, bracelets, and rings, as now commonly we use, what else is it, but to clothe and adorn proud rottenness ! Such choice of meats, daintiness of fare, variety of dishes, as in this heavy time of dearth and famine is somewhere used, what else is it but to feed the never satisfied belly ! Nay, are not some grown so nice that they may not suffer the wind to blow upon them, nor the sun to shine upon them ? Is it not for some so hot in summer, and again so cold in winter, that they can find no time to come to hear even the holy word of God ? And what else is it that we do thus cherish but a vile body, subject to all kinds of vanity ! The beginning whereof, what is it but earth ? The being whereof, what is it but as from the earth ? The end whereof, what is it but to the earth ? And yet what curiositie in clothing, and what daintiness in feeding this vile body ! An allowance there is, and meet there should be, that according to each man's degree there be both costliness in clothing, and daintiness in feeding. But in each degree there is such excess of decency, as that it may be thought that no degree considereth what a vile body it is that they cherish. How much better were it that we should consider ourselves, and that we should moderate ourselves in these things, each man according to his degree ! Let us, therefore, whether we eat, or drink, or clothe ourselves, remember that the bodies which we cherish are but vile bodies, dust and ashes, even very rottenness, and subject to all kind of vanity.

My second observation hence is, that Christ in the last day shall change our bodies, not our souls, and raise up our bodies, not our souls. For our souls, in their very deliverance from the contagion of our bodies, are purged and cleansed from every spot of sin, and immediately translated into heaven, and there abide till the last judgment. They die not, nor sleep, nor wander up and down, as some do foolishly imagine, but being spiritual substances, they live and abide for ever, as well out of the body, as in the body. Which appeareth, as by the souls of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 23, the one of which had immediately joy in Abraham's bosom, the other suffered woe and torments in hell immediately ; so doth it also appear by that vision of John, Rev. vi. 9, where he saw the souls under the altar, &c., for there the present state wherein they are after their departure out of their bodies until the last judgment is described, namely,

that they are under the altar, i.e. that they remain continually under the hand of our Lord Jesus, and that they be in joyful rest under his custody and protection. Our souls, then, are not changed or raised up in the last day, but our bodies, even as we make confession in our creed, when we believe the resurrection of the body; for therein we confess that we believe that in that day, when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, he shall raise again these self-same bodies out of the dust of death, and unite them unto our souls, that in soul and body we may live for ever with him in heaven in the perfect state of blessedness.

Yea, but doth not the preacher say, Eccles. iii. 19, that the condition of the children of men, and the condition of beasts, are even as one condition unto them? If, then, there be no resurrection of the bodies of beasts after this life, how do we say that there is any resurrection of the bodies of men? The meaning of the preacher is, that man is not able by reason and judgment to put a difference between the dying of man and beast, as by his eye to judge otherwise of a man being dead, than of a beast being dead. But neither he there speaks of man's estate after death, neither what we knew by the word of God touching the condition of man and of beast. For thence we know that the spirit of man ascendeth upward when it leaveth the body, and that the spirit of the beast descendeth downward to the earth, and that the body of the beast sleepeth for ever in the dust, but the body of man shall be raised up at the last day, unto life everlasting in the heavens. How, then, doth the apostle say, 1 Cor. xv. 10, that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God'? There the meaning of the apostle is, that the natural body, as it is now, subject to sin and corruption, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, until it be glorified, forasmuch as none unclean thing entereth into it. This, therefore, is it that we teach, Christ shall raise up our vile bodies in the last day, and make them like unto his glorious body, and so possess us in soul and body of that kingdom, prepared for us from before all beginnings.

Here, then, is a notable comfort for all God's children, that not only our souls after this life ended shall go unto God that gave them, but our bodies likewise in the last day shall be raised up again, and be made like unto Christ his glorious body, that, our souls and bodies being united together, we may live for ever with him in his kingdom of glory. For hereupon thus we may resolve with ourselves: What though I be afflicted and tormented; what though my miseries be as many and grievous as Job's were; what though I be racked, torn in pieces with wild horses, my body cast to the birds of the air, to the beasts of the land, or to the fishes in the sea? I know that after this life ended there will follow a joyful resurrection. Thus Job comforted himself amidst all his extremities,

saying, Job xix. 25-27, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand the last on the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet shall I see God in my flesh, whom I myself shall see, and mine eyes shall behold, and none other for me, though my reins be consumed within me.' And so we read that the saints of God mentioned to the Hebrews comforted themselves, Heb. xi. 35. For when they were racked and tormented, they would not be delivered. And why? Because they 'looked for a better resurrection.' Whatever, therefore, trouble, affliction, adversity, misery, death, do befall us or our friends, let us comfort ourselves in this, that there shall be an end of all troubles, when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and that there shall be a joyful resurrection in the last day, and glorification of our mortal bodies.

My third observation hence is, that the resurrection of bodies unto glorification is only of them whose soul-conversation in this life is in heaven. For albeit in the resurrection, not only the sheep, but the goats, not only they that have done good, but they that have done evil, shall rise again with their bodies, yet the one only unto everlasting joy and glory, the other unto everlasting woe and misery. So saith John, chap. v. 29, 'They shall come forth, that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation.' The same also is most plain by that separation of the sheep from the goats in the last day, where it is said, Mat. xxv., that the one shall stand at his right hand, the other at his left; that the portion of the one shall be with the saints of God in heaven, the portion of the other with the devil and his angels in hell; that the one shall go into life eternal, the other into everlasting pain.

Whereof we are to make this use, that if we will have our part in the second resurrection after this life unto glory, we must also have our part in the first resurrection in this life unto grace. In this life we must rise from the death of sin unto the life of God, in righteousness and true holiness, if in that day we will rise from the power of the grave unto life everlasting and blessedness in the heavens. For 'blessed and holy is he,' yea, only blessed and holy is he, 'that hath his part in the first resurrection; for on such the second death hath no power,' Rev. x. 6. Let us therefore follow the counsel of Peter, Acts iii. 19, let us 'amend our lives, and turn unto the Lord, that our sins may be done away when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Let us in this life grow up in grace, that in that day we may rise up in glory. Thus much of the third point, viz., what Christ in that day shall raise and glorify.

The fourth thing which I note is touching the manner, how Christ shall in that day glorify our vile bodies, namely, by changing, not the substance of our bodies, but by changing our vile bodies, and fashioning them

in quality like unto Christ his glorious body. Whence I observe what shall be the glorified bodies of the saints of God, wherein, at the hearing of his voice, and the sound of the trumpet, they shall rise in that day. And this it is: Our corruptible bodies shall be raised up in incorruption, our mortal bodies shall be raised up in immortality; our bodies, which were vile carcasses, shall be raised up in glory; our bodies, which were weak, shall be raised up in power; our bodies, which were natural, needing food, raiment, rest, sleep, physic, and the like, shall be raised up spiritual, needing none of these things, but being, as the angels of God, exempt from all wants and infirmities of this life. Our bodies in substance, in figure, in lineaments, and in members, shall be the self-same that they were in this life, inasmuch as in these there was no change by the sin of our first parents; but in such vile qualities as by sin they were poisoned and infected with, they shall so be changed as hath been said. And this is the glorification of our bodies in that day. He that shall come to be glorified in his saints shall thus change the vileness of our bodies, and fashion them like unto his own glorious body. Of this glorification Daniel speaketh, where he saith, chap. xii. 3, that 'they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.' And a glimpse of it Peter, James, and John saw when Christ was transfigured in the mount before them, Mat. xvii. 2. And the apostle at large, 1 Cor. xv., shews the whole manner of it to the Corinthians.

First, then, hence we learn that the body of Christ is not so deified or glorified as that the essential properties of God are communicated to it, as to be omnipotent, infinite, present everywhere, &c. For this being true, that our bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body, then our bodies also should then be omnipotent, infinite, everywhere, &c., which no man will say. They err, therefore, that maiutain the body of Christ to be really present everywhere.

Secondly, hence we may learn not to be dismayed at whatsoever sickness, danger, or death. It may be that thus our bodies may be turned into the grave, and that death have there dominion over us for a season; but in the last day our bodies shall be taken out of the power of death, and made like unto Christ his glorious body.

Thirdly, hence we may receive great comfort, that we have such a Saviour as will thus change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body. He will be a perfect Saviour, and therefore, as he receives our souls at their departure out of our bodies, to keep them safe under his custody and protection, so will he also in the last day change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body, that so he may be a perfect Saviour, both of our souls and bodies.

The fifth and last thing which from these words I note, is touching the means whereby Christ in that day shall glorify our vile bodies. For here is the doubt which the carnal man makes. He cannot see nor conceive how the bodies which are turned into dust and ashes, which have been some torn in pieces by the beasts of the land, some devoured by the fishes of the sea, some eaten up by the fowls of the air, how they, the same in substance, should possibly be raised up again and glorified. To meet, then, with this, my observation hence is, that Christ, by that divine power and effectual working whereby he raised up his own body from the grave, and whereby he is able to do what he will, even to subdue all things to himself, shall raise our bodies in that day, even the self-same in substance that we laid down, and shall glorify them. Christ he is the first fruits of them that sleep, and by his resurrection he hath sanctified all the elect thereunto; and as, according to the working of his mighty power, he raised himself from the dead, 'so by the same working of his mighty power shall he also raise us up. It may be that this may seem impossible with men; but 'the things that are impossible with men are possible with God,' Luke xviii. 27. And why should it seem so impossible? Can the potter make a new vessel of the same lump of clay, if the first fashion did dislike him? And is not God much more able out of our dust to raise again our dead bodies? Can the goldsmith by his art sunder divers metals one from another, or the alchymist draw one metal out of another? And is not God much more able to distinguish the dust of men's bodies from the dust of beasts, and the dust of one man's body from another, and to draw out our bodies from whencesoever they lie? Was God able in the beginning to create all things of nothing, and is he not much more able to make every man's body, at the resurrection, of his own matter? Again, shall napkins be brought from Paul's body, and diseases depart from them? Shall the shadow of Peter help the weak and sick? Shall Elisha his bones give life to a dead corpse cast into his grave? And shall not Christ much more by his divine power change these vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body? He that doubteth of his power shall be drenched up of his majesty. Take this one proof further from our daily experience. At night we lie down and sleep, and in the morning we wake and rise up again. Our death, what else is it but as a sleep, and our resurrection, what else but, as it were, an awaking again? And as in the one it is, so in the other, the mighty power of God shall be seen, when, by his power, he shall raise us up out of the sleep of death, and glorify us with himself in the kingdom of his Father.

This, then, may serve us to meet with all doubts against this point of the resurrection and glorification of our mortal and vile bodies. He which is willing hath also power to do it, and by his power he shall

raise us up in the last day, and shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. We are not, therefore, to doubt of it, lest so we also deny his power; but rather we are to comfort ourselves in this, that he who by his power

is able to subdue all things unto himself, will also, by his power, raise up our bodies in the last day, and will change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.

LAUS OMNIS SOLI DEO.

LECTURE LXXIV.

Therefore, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, so continue in the Lord, ye beloved. I pray Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 1, 2.

MANY and notable, and most worthy our continual meditation, have been the points which we have heard by occasion of the things contained in the former chapter, as touching necessary watchfulness against false teachers, together with certain marks of such, ver. 2, 19; touching the true circumcision of the Spirit, ver. 3; touching the vanity of all confidence and rejoicing in anything without Christ, ver. 4 to 9; touching justification by the alone righteousness of Christ Jesus, through faith in his blood, ver. 9; touching sanctification, by some sense of the knowledge of Christ, and of the virtuo of his resurrection in ourselves, &c., and by an holy acknowledgment of imperfection, and pursuit after perfection, ver. 10 to 15; touching Christian perfection, ver. 15; touching the sole rule of man's life, ver. 16; touching an holy imitation, ver. 17; touching evil and ungodly walkers, ver. 18, 19; touching an holy conversation, ver. 20; touching the expectation of the faithful for Christ his second coming, ver. 20; touching the glorification of our vile bodies in the day of Christ by the power of Christ, ver. 21; some of which the apostle purposely disputeth, and others by occasion he toucheth. For in that chapter ye may remember that the apostle instructeth the Philippians touching circumcision, and touching justification, and touching sanctification, because of the false teachers, which urged the circumcision of the flesh, and justification by works, and told them that they knew Christ well enough. And therefore, first, he exhorteth them to beware of such false teachers; secondly, he instructeth them in the true circumcision of the Spirit; thirdly, he tells them what he in his own person thought of his own works, and of all the privileges that he had without Christ; what he thought of the righteousness of Christ through faith, what he thought of his knowledge of Christ, and how he laboured still after further knowledge of Christ, and further perfection than as yet he had attained unto; fourthly, he exhorteth them to be of the same mind with him in these things, and all to proceed by one rule of the word; fifthly, and lastly, he exhorteth them to follow him, and such as he is, for that those other deceivers that were amongst them were both enemies to the truth, and had earthly minds only; but he, and such as walked as he did, had their con-

versation in heaven, from whence they looked for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who should change their vile body, &c.

Now, the apostle in this chapter concludeth his epistle with certain exhortations, with signification of his joy in the Lord for their liberality sent unto him in prison by their minister Epaphroditus, and with divers salutations to them, and from himself and them that were with him. His exhortations are some of them general, and some of them particular, as we shall see in the handling of the former part of this chapter.

His first exhortation, in the first verse, ye see, is general, wherein he exhorteth the Philippians in general unto perseverance in the faith of Christ Jesus, and the practice of an holy life, as they have been taught, and as hitherto they had done. His second exhortation, in the second verse, is particular, wherein he exhorteth two chief women amongst them, as it may seem, to unity and concord, either betwixt themselves, or betwixt them and the church at Philippi. In the first general exhortation I note, first, the manner how the apostle comes unto his exhortation; secondly, the kind and loving terms wherein he speaketh unto the Philippians before his exhortation; thirdly, the exhortation itself.

Touching the manner how the apostle comes unto his exhortation, it is by way of conclusion upon that which before he had said: 'Therefore, my brethren,' &c., 'so continue,' &c. And it is as if he had said, Seeing those of the concision among you, which urge circumcision, and justification by works, are such evil workers, as ye have heard; and seeing our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change, &c., therefore continue ye in the Lord, so as ye have done, and as I have now taught you to do by example in mine own person, and suffer not yourselves to be seduced by them that are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is, &c. Thus the apostle, by way of conclusion from that which he had said before, inferreth this general exhortation unto perseverance and continuance in the Lord.

Now, touching the kind and loving terms wherein he speaks unto the Philippians, ye see he calls them his brethren, beloved, and longed for, his joy and his

crown. In that he saith unto them, ‘my brethren, beloved, and longed for,’ he sheweth his own kind affection towards them; and in that he addeth, ‘my joy and my crown,’ he signifieth their piety, wherein he was comforted. To have said unto them only, ‘my brethren,’ as in the beginning of the third chapter; or only, ‘my beloved,’ as chap. ii. ver. 12, had betokened abundantly his affection towards them; but in that, as not contented with the one, or both, he addeth also a third argument of love, he thereby plainly sheweth what a large room they had in his heart. He calleth them his brethren in Christ, as begotten by one Spirit, unto one God, in one faith, through one gospel of Christ Jesus. He calleth them his beloved, in the best bond of love, the unity of the Spirit, through the embracing of the same truth of Christ Jesus. And for that he saith that he longed for them, he sheweth it in chap. i., where he saith, that he ‘longed after them all from the very heart-root in Christ Jesus,’ Philip. i. 8, which was, no doubt, to strengthen them, and to bestow upon them some spiritual comfort, because of those false teachers that troubled them. How could he more shew a kind and loving affection towards them? And as by these he shews his affection towards them, so by those titles that follow he shews again, on the other side, their great piety and godliness. For therefore doth he call them his *joy*, because of their fellowship, as himself speaketh, which they had in the gospel with other churches, chap. i. 5, from the first day that they had received the gospel unto that present, which was a sufficient matter of his rejoicing; and therefore doth he call them his *crown*, because their constancy and perseverance was now his glory among other churches, and should be the crown of his rejoicing in the day of Christ. The speech is borrowed from them that, for matters well achieved, in running, wrestling, or the like, receive a crown of glory. And it argueth their great profit by his labours, for which he should receive a crown. Thus ye see what these kind terms import, and in what sense the apostle giveth them unto the Philippians.

The third thing which I noted was, the exhortation itself, which is, to continue in the Lord: ‘So continue in the Lord, ye beloved.’ The words precisely are, ‘So stand in the Lord;’ but the sense is very truly given when it is said, ‘So continue in the Lord.’ For, to stand in grace, in faith, in the Spirit, in the Lord, is usually in the New Testament, to continue in grace, in faith, in the Spirit, in the Lord: ‘By Christ,’ saith the apostle, Rom. v. 2, ‘we have access through faith unto this grace wherein we stand,’ that is, wherein we *continue*; ‘Stand in the faith,’ saith he in another place, 1 Cor. xvi. 3, that is, *continue* in the faith; ‘Let your conversation be,’ saith he in the first chapter of this epistle, Philip. i. 27, ‘as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that I may hear of your matters, that ye stand in one spirit,’ that is, that ye *continue* in one spirit; and to the Thessalonians,

1 Thes. iii. 8, ‘Now,’ saith the apostle, ‘are we alive if ye stand in the Lord,’ that is, if ye *continue* in the Lord. So in this place, ‘so stand in the Lord,’ that is, so continue as they that keep their standing, without shrinking, fainting, sliding, or starting aside. For the speech is borrowed from them that stand upon their guard or watch, or in their rank wherein they are set. Now, wherein would he have them to stand and continue? Namely, ‘in the Lord,’ that is, in the knowledge and in the faith of Christ Jesus, rooted and built in him, and established in the faith. But what meaneth he by this that he saith, ‘So continue in the Lord?’ So, that is, as hitherto ye have done, and as now ye have been taught by example in mine own person, renouncing all confidence in the flesh, counting all man’s righteousness by any works whatsoever but loss and dung, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus; so continue and persevere in the Lord, rooted and built in him, and established in the faith; do this, ye beloved, in the best bond of love. And let this be spoken touching the points of this general exhortation, and the meaning of the words. Now let us gather hence some notes for our further use.

The first thing which I note is, from the kind and loving terms wherein the apostle writes to the Philippians. He exhorts them to perseverance in the knowledge and faith of Christ Jesus; but in such a tender and loving manner, as that therein he bewrays a most kind and loving affection towards them, saying, ‘My brethren, beloved and longed for,’ &c. And so in his second exhortation, in ver. 2, he ‘prayeth Euodias, and beseecheth Syntyche;’ and likewise in his third exhortation, in ver. 3, he ‘beseecheth his faithful yoke-fellow.’ Whence I observe a necessary duty for the minister of the gospel, which is, to be so tenderly affected towards his people, as that in all kind and loving manner he labour to win them unto that which is good, and to wean them from that which is evil. His people should not be kept strait in his bowels, but should have a large room in his heart, so that, whether he write or speak unto them, it may appear that it is out of his love and tender affection towards them. Thus our apostle professeth, in plain speech, that he was affected towards the Corinthians, where he saith, 2 Cor. vi. 11, ‘O Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is made large. Ye are not kept strait in us.’ And this affection both our apostle, and the rest of the apostles, bewray always in all their epistles, instructing them to whom they wrote, as in the wholesome word of truth, so in all meekness of spirit, and mildness of speech, as from a love most unfeigned and Christian: ‘I beseech you,’ saith our apostle to the Romans, chap. xii. 1, ‘brethren, by the mercies of God;’ and in like sort, in all his epistles. James, chap. i. 19, ‘My dear brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath;’ Peter, 1 Peter ii. 11, ‘Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts,

which fight against the soul ; John, 1 John ii. 1, 'My babes, my little children, I write unto you, that ye sin not ; and Jude, ver. 17, 'Remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.' These were their bowels of love towards their brethren in Christ ; and in such bowels of love should the ministers of the gospel, after their example, deal with their people, exhorting them and admonishing them with all patience and long suffering, and in all love unto them, leading them forth besides the waters of comfort, which may spring up in them into everlasting life.

It may be that here some will say, Oh, we should like this well, if the ministers of the gospel would do thus ; but some of them are so sharp, that they seem to forget that they are ministers of the gospel, at least they remember not this duty. Why ? Because they are sharp, and come with a rod. Is it an argument against the father of the body, that he loves not his child, because he sometimes reproves him, and sometimes punisheth him with the rod ? Or is it no argument against the father of the body, and shall it be an argument against such fathers as beget you in Christ Jesus through the gospel ? Again, did not those holy apostles that came in such a spirit of meekness, as we have heard, come also sometimes with a rod ? The proofs are so pregnant, that I think none will doubt of it, as neither of this, that their coming with a rod was in great love. Again, did not the same God that came to Elijah only in a soft and still voice, come unto Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in the earthquake, and unto Nadab and Abihu in the fire ? Again, are there not in our congregations some such as had need to be wounded, as well as some such as had need to be healed ? And if we love both, must we not bring with us both oil and vinegar ? Both sharpness and meekness, in their due places, are needful, and a wise discretion in them both is most needful ; and in both, the wise minister sheweth forth the bowels of his love. Indeed, the terms of love are different, when we come with a rod, and when we come in the spirit of meekness. Will ye, then, that we come unto you in these terms of love which our apostle here useth, of 'my brethren, beloved and longed for' ?

Here, then, is also a necessary duty for you, that ye be our joy and our crown, that so unto the rest we may, with the apostle, add these also, 'my joy and my crown.' Ye, by receiving the wholesome word of truth which is able to save your souls, and by bringing forth the fruits thereof, in a sober, righteous, and godly life in this present world, should be the matter of our rejoicing over you in Christ Jesus. So was the elect lady, unto whom John wrote his second epistle, as he witnesseth, saying, 2 John 4, 'I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in the truth, as we have received a commandment of the Father.' So was Gaius, unto whom John wrote his third epistle, as he witnesseth, saying, 3 John 3, 4, 'I rejoiced

greatly when the brethren came, and testified of the truth that is in thee, how thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my sons walk in verity.' So was Philemon unto Paul, as he witnesseth, saying, Philem. 7, 'We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because by thee the saints are comforted.' And so was Timothy unto the same apostle the rejoicing of his heart, because he continuall in the things which he had learned. So herein should ye fulfil our joy, that ye suffer the word of the Lord to dwell in you plenteously, that ye and your children walk in the truth, as ye have been taught in Christ Jesus ; that your faith groweth exceedingly, and that the love of every one of you aboundeth towards another. And as thus ye should be our joy, so should ye also be our crown. Ye, by your faith in Christ Jesus, and by your love towards all saints, and by your growing up in all things into him which is your head, that is Christ, by the work of our ministry, should be our glory in all places, and the crown of our rejoicing in the day of Christ Jesus. So were the Thessalonians unto this our apostle, as himself witnesseth, saying, 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20, 'What is our hope, our joy, or crown of rejoicing ? are not you even it in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? Yes, ye are our glory and joy.' And why so ? Even because of their effectual faith, and diligent love, and patient hope in the Lord, whereof he spake in the first chapter. And so were these Philippians also unto him, as here he witnesseth ; and why ? Even because he had not run in vain, nor laboured in vain amongst them. And so ye should so abound in all knowledge and in all judgment, and be so filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God, as that ye might be the crown of our rejoicing in the day of Christ, that we have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. Otherwise, if, the more we love you, the less we be loved of you again ; if, the more we labour amongst you and admonish you, the more ye harden your hearts and despise us, even for our work's sake ; if, the more careful we are to inform your understandings in the truth, the more ye stop your ears at the voice of our charming, charm we never so wisely ; if, the more we endeavour to beget you in the faith, and present you before God blameless in that day, ye start aside like a broken bow, and defile yourselves with every hateful sin ; to be short, if we spend our strength in vain amongst you, and for nothing, then how can we rejoice in you as in our joy and our crown ? And if not so, then how can we come unto you in these terms of love, 'my brethren,' 'beloved,' 'my little children, dearly beloved' ? If ye be not joined with us in one faith, and in one hope in Christ Jesus, how can we speak unto you as unto our brethren ? If the love of God be not in you indeed, how can we speak unto you as unto our beloved ? If ye honour not the Father, nor obey his holy will, how can we speak unto you as unto little children ? If ye

desire not the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, how shall we say that we long for you when we are absent from you?

That, therefore, we may always come unto you in such terms of love as ye desire, and as here our apostle doth unto the Philippians, let us not run in vain, nor labour in vain amongst you; but receive from us with all gladness the word of salvation, which is able to save your souls. Be diligent to hear, and careful afterwards to meditate on the things which ye have heard, that as good hearers ye may grow up in all godly knowledge of God's will, and in all holy obedience thereunto, and that ye may say with the prophet, Ps. cxix. 11, 'O Lord, I have hid thy word within my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously in all wisdom, that ye may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may discern things that differ one from another, that ye may be pure,' &c. Philip. i. 9, 10. Follow after the truth in love, and in all things grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ; that, as at this day, we greatly rejoice to see the forward and willing minds of many of you to come unto the house of God, and to hear those things that belong unto your peace, so our joy may be fulfilled daily more and more, and ye may be the crown of our rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. And if, at any time, we use sharpness of speech, know this, that it is for their sakes that obey not the truth, that we may reclaim them from wandering out of the right way wherein they should walk. And if the hurts of our people may be healed only by applying gentle medicines, without cutting and lancing their sores, only by pouring suppling oil, without pouring vinegar into their wounds, let no man think that we will use sharpness of speech. In a word, this is our desire, to present you pure and blameless in that day, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Be ye filled with knowledge and love, and the fruits of righteousness, that ye may be our joy and crown, now and in the day of Christ.

The second thing which I note is, the apostle's exhortation, together with the reason thereof. His exhortation is, that the Philippians would stand and continue without shrinking, fainting, sliding, or starting aside, in the knowledge and faith of Christ Jesus, rooted in him, and stablished in the faith, so as hitherto they had done, and as now they had been taught by example in his own person, renouncing all confidence in the flesh, and in things without Christ, and rejoicing only in Christ Jesus. The reason of this his exhortation unto this perseverance, is, because he would not have them entangled with those evil workers of the concision, which minded earthly things, and whose end is damnation: but would have them followers of him, and such as he is, whose conversation is in heaven, &c. 'Therefore so continue,' &c.

This exhortation, then, implying a duty for us, hence

I observe a necessary duty for all God's children, which is, perseverance and continuance in the faith and truth of Christ Jesus, so as we have been taught out of the gospel of Christ Jesus: a duty much, yet never too much urged, considering how many, after they have put their hand unto the plough, look back; after they have begun in the Spirit, end in the flesh. 'Abide in me,' saith our Saviour, John xv. 4, 'and I in you.' 'Stand fast in the faith,' saith the apostle, to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. And unto Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 'Continue,' saith he, 'thou in the things which thou hast learned, and art persuaded thereof, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.' And of all the apostles we read, that still they exhorted all the churches everywhere to continue in the grace of God, and with full purpose of heart to cleave steadfastly unto the Lord, Acts xi. 23, xiii. 43. For what shall it profit us to have tasted of the good word of God, and by the hearing of the gospel preached, to have come to some knowledge of the Lord, and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, if afterward, with the church of Ephesus, we forsake our first love, and make not an end of our salvation with fear and trembling? 'If ye continue in my word,' saith Christ to the Jews that believed in him, John viii. 31, 32, 'ye are verily my disciples, and shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' But 'as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can we, except we abide in Christ the Lord,' chap. xv. 4. Nay, if we continue not in the Lord, and in the faith and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is a plain argument against us, that whatsoever show we make in the flesh, yet, indeed, we never walked in the truth. So the apostle St John plainly argueth, where he saith, 1 John ii. 19, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But this cometh to pass, that it might appear that they are not all of us.' Where ye see that apostates, and such as fall away from the faith and from the truth of Christ Jesus, are proved plainly to be hypocrites, and never indeed to have walked in the truth, by this argument, because they continued not in the truth which they had learned and received. As, therefore, the precept or exhortation both of our Saviour and of our apostle, requireth this duty of us, that we continue in the Lord, and in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ, so this also, that it may appear that we were truly rooted in Christ Jesus, and that we walked in the truth. And now see whether the same reason do not urge us unto this duty, whereby the apostle then urged the Philippians thereunto; for are there not now many that would separate us from Christ Jesus? Are there not now many evil workers, that teach us to repose confidence in the merit of our works, and not to rejoice only in Christ Jesus? many that teach justification to be by our own righteousness, which is of the law, and not by the alone righteousness of Christ Jesus through faith? many that teach

perfection of sanctification in this life, otherwise than we are taught by the gospel of Christ Jesus? many that teach us to be otherwise minded touching the vantage and merit of works, touching the righteousness of Christ through faith, touching the perfection of sanctification in this life, than was this apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yes, many such deceivers there are, as heretofore we have heard, creeping in every corner, and leading captive simple men and women after their own lusts. And, therefore, the urging of this duty, even for that cause, is now necessary unto us, that Christians, at this day, continue in the Lord, and in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ, so as they have been taught out of the writings of the prophets and apostles, and so as they have done by the illumination of the Spirit through the ministry of the word.

A doubt or two will here haply be moved. First, Whether it be in us to continue in the Lord if we will, or it be wholly and only from grace, without any power of our own? Whereunto I answer, that as 'no man can come unto Christ, except the Father draw him,' John vi. 44, making him, if unwilling, willing, by putting his Holy Spirit into him; so no man can abide and continue in him, but only by the grace of the same Spirit. For 'it is God that worketh in us both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure,' Philip. ii. 13, of his own free grace, that he may be all in all, and that all the glory of our salvation may be given unto him alone. Why, then, doth the apostle exhort us to continue in the Lord, if it be not in our own power, if we will, being holpen by grace, to continue in the Lord? Which is as if it should be said, If the fruit and increase of the earth be wholly the blessing of the Lord, then why doth the husbandman manure and till his ground, and bestow such pains and travail therein? Or as if it should be said, If faith be wholly the gift of God, then why are we so called upon to come and hear the word preached? For, as he giveth corn, and wine, and oil, and all things else needful for this life, but yet by such means as he hath ordained thereunto; and again, as faith is the gift of God alone, but yet given us by the means of hearing the word preached, so the Lord, which confirmeth us unto the end, 1 Cor. i. 8, worketh in us this holy gift of perseverance and continuing in him, but by such holy admonitions and exhortations as he will have used to that purpose; for admonitions and exhortations are not therefore used to imply any power in ourselves to do the things we are exhorted unto, but because they are the means whereby God worketh his good graces in us. And they do and may rather put us in mind of our unability, than of our ability to do the things that we are exhorted; that seeing we cannot of ourselves will or do the things whereunto we are exhorted, as, to come unto the Lord, to continue in the Lord, therefore we should fly unto him, and pray unto him, that he would draw us unto him, that he would

confirm us unto the end, and that he would frame our wills according to his blessed will, that we may by him do what his will is. To continue, then, in the Lord, is the grace of God's Holy Spirit, and the exhortation thereunto is very needful, both because it is the means whereby the Lord will work his grace in us, and to set us unto the Lord, to beg that of him, which of ourselves we are no way able to do.

A second doubt also may be moved, whether it can be, that such of God's children as are in the Lord, should not continue in the Lord? Whereunto I answer, that such of God's children as are grafted in the true olive, may for some while seem like unto withered branches; the graces of God's Spirit may for a time decay in them, and lie smothered, so that they appear no more than the fire under the ashes or embers. So we may see in David, who having committed murder and adultery, walked on a long time, and was never touched with any remorse for such his grievous sins, so that for the time he might seem to be as a withered branch. So we may see in Peter many eclipses of the graces of God's Spirit, when he dissuaded Christ his passion, when he denied Christ his Master, and that with an oath; when he fled from his Master, when he dissembled for fear of them of the circumcision, and drew Barnabas also into the like dissimulation, &c. So we may see in Demas, who for a time left Paul, and embraced this present world, and yet afterwards became again a fellow-helper with Paul. In other holy persons the like may be shewed, in whom the graces of God have for a time been decayed, and they been like to withered branches; but they cannot finally fall from grace, but 'he that hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,' Philip. i. 6; for hath not he himself said, John x. 28, 29, 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to take them out of my Father's hand'? Hath not he prayed for them whom the Father hath given him, that they may be one with him, that they may be kept from evil, that they may be sanctified through the truth? John xvii. And doth not John say, 1 John iii. 9, that 'whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' namely, that sin that is unto death, so that he fall away finally from God? Men may have tasted of the good word of God, and come to some knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet fall away; but they that have truly tasted of the powers of the world to come, shall be even as the mount Sion, which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever. Why, then, doth the apostle exhort us to continue in the Lord, if it be sure that we shall continue in the Lord? It is to remove from us carnal security, and to teach us to depend on the Lord, by whom we continue in his faith, fear, and favour.

To conclude this point, therefore, as the apostle

here speaketh unto the Philippians, so say I unto you, continue in the Lord, even in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ, so as ye have been taught in Christ Jesus. Let it never be said to you, as it was to the Galatians, 'Ye did run well, who did let you, that ye

did not obey the truth?' But as ye have begun to love and like the truth, so continue to walk in the truth, that when Christ Jesus shall come in the clouds of heaven, ye may be the crown of our rejoicing, and that ye may also appear with him in glory.

LECTURE LXXV.

I pray Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of one accord in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee, faithful yoke-fellow, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 2, 3.

NOW follow certain particular exhortations unto particular and private persons, touching some discord fallen out amongst them. In the second verse, his request is unto Euodias and Syntyche, that they would be of one accord in the Lord. What Euodias and Syntyche were, it is not certain, neither are they mentioned elsewhere in the Scripture. Like it is, by this place, that they were two women of good note, and such as had much stood with Paul at his first planting of the church at Philippi; but now it seems they were at odds, whether the one with the other, or both with the rest of the church, and whether about matters of faith and religion, or about ordinary matters of common life, it is not certain. This we see, the apostle would gladly compose the strife, and therefore he exhorted them to be 'of one accord in the Lord'; that is, of one mind and one judgment in the things of the Lord, betwixt themselves and with the church. If we understand that they differed in matters of faith and religion, or if we understand the words in general, of what dissensions soever, then the exhortation is, that laying aside all debates and dissensions, they would be of one accord in the Lord, that is, they would dwell together in such unity as is pleasing to the Lord. 'I pray Euodias, and beseech Syntyche,' &c. It followeth:—

Yea, and I beseech thee, &c. In this verse the apostle's exhortation or request is unto 'his faithful yoke-fellow,' that he would be a means to compose the strifes of Euodias and Syntyche, with this reason implied, because they were women which had laboured with him when he preached the gospel at Philippi, nor with him only, but with Clement also, and with divers others which laboured with him in the same work, whose names are written in the book of life. What this faithful yoke-fellow was whom he maketh this request unto, it is not certain. Much disputation there is who it should be. Like it is that it was some special man that preached the gospel purely and sincerely there with him at Philippi. Him he requested to help those women, namely, Euodias and Syntyche. How to help them? Namely, to order their matters, and to compose their strifes, whatsoever they were. And why should he do so? That which the apostle addeth, seemeth to be added as a reason to move his faithful yokefellow to help them, and to compose their

strifes; 'for they laboured with him in the gospel,' that is, when the gospel was first preached by him at Philippi, they laboured, yea, and even strove, for so the word signifieth, putting themselves in hazard for the hearing of the gospel preached, and for the defence of the gospel; for in the Acts mention is made of women, among whom was Lydia, that came together to a place besides the river, Acts xvi. 13, not daring, as it may seem, to have their assemblies in the city of Philippi, and there heard the word at Paul's mouth. These two women, it may seem, were two of them, of whom the apostle for that cause saith, that they laboured and strove with him in the gospel, he being willing to preach, and they desirous to hear, when there was great danger for both, and they standing much in his defence when he was much contradicted. Neither doth he command them to have laboured with him alone in the gospel, but with Clement also, and with other his fellow-labourers, which laboured with him in the work when the gospel was first preached at Philippi. Who this Clement was it is not certain, as neither who these his fellow-labourers were. Silas, it is like by that place in the Acts, was one. Ministers of the gospel they were, which joined their labours with Paul, to the gathering of the church at Philippi, whose names, though they were not written by him in this epistle, yet he saith, that they were 'written in the book of life'; whereby he meaneth, that their life was as certainly sealed up with God, as if their names had been written up in a book to that purpose; for the speech is borrowed from the manner of them that bill the names of them in a book, whom they have chosen into their service, whom then they know to be theirs, because they have their names billed in a book. So God knoweth who are his, as certainly as if their names were written in a book; and their life is as surely sealed with him, as if their names were registered to that purpose. The sum, then, of the apostle's reason is this: these women, for their labour with him and other his fellow-labourers in the gospel, were worthy that he should do this for them, and therefore he requests his faithful yoke-fellow that he would help them, and compose the strifes which were either betwixt themselves, or betwixt them and the church there. And let this suffice to be spoken touching the scope of these particular exhortations,

and the meaning of the words in them both. Now let us see what notes we may gather hence for our further use.

First, then, in the person of Paul, I note his holy care, not only to instruct and exhort the whole church of Philippi in general, but likewise privately such particular persons as he heard it was needful to instruct and exhort. For here we see how, after his general exhortations unto the Philippians, he cometh unto particular exhortations to private persons. Whence I observe a holy duty of a good minister, which is not only publicly to teach and exhort, and comfort his whole congregation in the church, but also privately to labour with particular persons, so as shall be needful for them: if they need instruction, to instruct them; exhortation, to exhort them; consolation, to comfort them; correction, to reprove them; peace-making, to compose their strifes; and every way to labour with them as it shall appear to be needful for them. Examples hereof we have in all the apostles, of whom it is said, Acts v. 42, that 'they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ daily in the temple, and from house to house.' Ye see likewise not only John's general epistle, but his private epistles also, one unto a certain lady, and another unto one Gaius; in either of which, as he thought it needful, he comforted them, and exhorted them, and admonished them. And this our apostle, ye may see how he taught both openly and throughout every house, Acts xx. 20; how he reproved sins not only in general, but in particular noted the sins of the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v. 1, of Hymenaeus and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 17, of Demas, of Alexander the coppersmith, chap. iv. 10-14, &c.; how he dealt with Philemon in particular for Onesimus; how he comforted and admonished Timothy and Titus in particular. And what else meaneth that of the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 2, where he chargeth to be 'instant in season and out of season,' but that the minister of the gospel should at all times, and in all places, publicly and privately, generally and particularly, take every occasion to profit God's people, whether it be by teaching, by improving, by rebuking, by exhorting, or how else soever it shall seem needful or profitable? For if we may but pull one brand out of the fire, if we may but convert one sinner from going astray out of his way, if we may but instruct one man in righteousness unto salvation, even by private and particular dealing with him, we shall not lose our reward, but even he shall be our crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

I wish they would at length remember this duty, who having their consciences seared with an hot iron, vouchsafe not either publicly or privately to teach, or exhort, or admonish the flock of God which dependeth on them. As public with all, so private dealing with particulars, will be seen to be needful, if

any man do but with half an eye looke into the state of the people everywhere. The ignorance in some, the wickedness in others, the jars amongst others in every place, shew plainly how needful it is unto public teaching to add also particular admonitions and exhortations. But they that cannot be drawn unto the one, namely, to teach their people in their assemblies, it is hardly to be hoped that they will deal with men in particular on the way, or at the plough-tail, or at the anvil, or at the shop-board, how needful soever it be. This place serveth not much to speak unto them, and therefore I let them alone.

Secondly, In the person of Paul, I note his godly care to compose the strifes of these two goodly women, Euodias and Syntyche. For there being a jar either between themselves, about some private matters, or between them and the church about some matter of religion, both himself exhorteth them to be of one accord in the Lord, and also he dealeth with his faithful yoke-fellow to help to order their matters, and to compose their strifes, commanding them as worthy that he should do this for them. Whence I observe a very commendable quality, as in the minister of Christ, so in every good Christian, which is, both by themselves and by all the means that they can make, to make up such quarrels as fall out among their brethren. It is registered unto the everlasting commendation of Chloe, 1 Cor. i. 11, and her house, that when great dissensions and contentions broke out in the church of Corinth, they being very desirous to have them stayed, and yet not able to stay them, advertised Paul thereof, that he in his wisdom might take some course to stay them. And our apostle gives it for a precept unto Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 23, to 'put away foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they engender strife.' Where the meaning in general is, that he must be so careful to stay all strife, that he must be careful to take away everything which may be any occasion of strife. And our Saviour pronounceth a blessing upon them that make peace among their brethren, saying, Mat. v. 9, 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' For God being the God of peace, the more that we have peace amongst ourselves, and the more that we study and labour to make peace among others, the more like we are unto God, and the more we shew ourselves to be the children of God. So that we see that to make peace and end strifes is very commendable, both with God and men.

This, then, first may teach us to beware how we do sow strife and dissension betwixt man and man. For look how commendable a thing it is to make peace and end strifes; so intolerable and odious a thing it is to blow the bellows of discord amongst brethren and neighbours; and as they that make peace do thereby shew themselves to be the children of God, with whom dwelleth peace, so those seditious firebrands, that delight to stir up strife among their brethren, and to

set men by the ears together, shew plainly that they are the sons of that wicked one, who cannot abide that brethren should dwell together in unity. ‘These six things,’ saith Solomon, Prov. vi. 16–19, ‘doth the Lord hate; yea, his soul abhorreth seven: the haughty eyes, a lying tongne, hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that imagineth wicked enterprises, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and him that raiseth up contentions among brethren.’ All these seven things the Lord hateth, yea, his soul abhorreth the seventh as plain as murder. For what is murder if this be not, to rend in sunder the members of the same body, by sowing debates and divisions amongst them; and so by brawls, and jars, and quarrelling, to kill both the soul and the body? ‘The beginning of contention,’ saith the same Solomon, Prov. xvii. 14, ‘is as one that openeth the waters;’ so that he that bloweth the bellows of contention, and openeth the way unto strife amongst neighbours, is as he that, by pulling up a sluice, letteith in the waters upon a country, and so drowneth the whole country; which also sheweth that such makebates are murderers.

Let them look unto this, which either by privy whisperings, or open detractions, or any false suggestion whatsoever, either seek to make variance where there is none, or where they perceive some little dislike, there add fire unto heat, and set them as far at odds as they can. Of what root soever they be that are such, they are the sons of Belial, and no less than murderers. And therefore, as Solomon giveth advice touching the scorner, Prov. xxii. 10, the like do I touching such a contentious man: ‘Cast out the scorner,’ saith he; ‘cast out the makebate, say I, ‘and strife shall go out;’ cast out the makebate out of company, country, commonwealth, city, house where thou dwellest, so contention and reproach shall cease. The truth ever will abide the light, and feareth not to speak with any man in the gate; but these are comonly whisperers, and love rather to speak in the ear than on the house-top. Suspect them therefore by their privy whispering, and when once thou knowest them, for ever afterwards be thou ware of them.

Secondly, This should teach us, not only to study to live in peace ourselves with all men, but farther, when others are at odds, to make peace between them. ‘Follow peace with all men,’ saith the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 14; and the apostle to the Romans, chap. xii. 18, ‘If it be possible, as much as in you is, have peace with all men.’ And surely a most blessed thing it is to see men to be of one accord in the Lord; witness the psalmist, where he saith, Ps. exxiii. 1, ‘Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren to dwell together in unity.’ But the servants of God are not only to be peaceable themselves, but when either there are open jars, or inclination thereunto, they should labour by all means, both by themselves and others, to set them at one.

It was a good speech of Abraham unto Lot, Gen. xiii. 8, when he said unto him, ‘Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, neither between mine herdmen and thine herdmen; for we be brethren.’ In imitation whereof, when strife is, or is like to be, we are to interpose ourselves, and to say, Let there be no strife, I pray you, between you; for ye are brethren; ye are neighbours and friends; ye have ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one hope of your vocation;’ be ye therefore one amongst yourselves. ‘Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, crying, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all maliciousness; and be ye courteous one towards another, and tender-hearted, forgiving one another, if either have a quarrel against other, even as God for Christ’s sake forgave you. Yea, and as Paul said to the Corinthians for going to law one with another, so are we to say unto them that any way strive, ‘Why rather suffer ye not wrong?’ Why rather sustain ye not harm, than fall at such quarrelling one with another? Thus, I say, should we in hatred of strife, and love of peace, as peacemakers labour to compose strifes, and to make peace where it is not.

But what comonly say we in such cases? One saith, It were very well done to take up their quarrels, and to make them friends. Another saith, that he loves not to meddle in other men’s matters, and to make himself some business where haply he shall have little thanks. Another sports himself at their contentions, and saith with himself, So, so, there goes the game. Another haply sheweth his dislike of their jars, and puts in a word to friend them, and then he thinks he hath done well. But not many in such cases deal both by themselves and by others, and labour by all means to take up their quarrels, that they may be of one accord in the Lord. Well, if, when we were enemies unto God, and God was angry with us to destroy us for ever, Christ Jesus, the Son of the ever-living God, had not come in the similitude of sinful flesh, to make peace between God and us, what had become of us? If God had not sent his Son, and if he had not come to reconcile us unto God, our portion had been with the devil and his angels, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. Let us, men and brethren, be followers of Christ, let us follow Abraham and our apostle. Let us not only labour to have peace with God, and to be at peace one with another; but when we see that any variance is, or like to be between man and man, let us labour, as much as we can, to set them at one. Let us hate strife and debate both in ourselves and in others, and let us love peace and agreement both in ourselves and in others. And then surely the God of peace shall be with us to bless us, and to give us his peace, which passeth all understanding. And let this be observed from the person of Paul.

The next thing which I note is in the persons of Euodias and Syntyche; wherein, first, I note the reli-

gious affection of these two virtuous women; for by conference of this place with that in the Acts, it may appear, that when the gospel was first preached at Philippi, they not only gladly embraced the gospel, but stood much for the defence of the gospel against them that persecuted the truth of Christ Jesus, and often assembled themselves together with other women without the town, beside the river, to pray and to hear the word preached. Whereupon it is that the apostle here saith that they laboured with him in the gospel, nor with him only, but with Clement also, and with other his fellow-labourers in the work of the ministry. Here, then, is a good pattern for all women to look upon, that they be alike religiously affected as these women were, and give like testimony thereof as they did. There is no privilege unto them by their sex from this; but as all the rest of God's children, so they should embrace pure religion from their hearts, exercise themselves in the law of their God day and night, and seek the Lord from the ground of their hearts. Yea, and such hath been the mercy of the Lord toward this sex, as that women in all ages have been worthily renowned for many notable graces of God's Spirit. Sarah's obedience is set forth by Peter for an example for ever, 1 Peter iii. 6. The government and victory of Deborah was not inferior to the government and victory of any of the judges of Israel, Judges iv. What shall I speak of Esther's religious depending upon God, when she hazarded herself for the deliverance of her people? Esther iv.; of the widow's godly depending upon God's providence, when in the great famine she relieved Elijah with some of that little which she had, 1 Kings xvii.; of Anna's continual abiding in the temple, and serving God there with fasting and prayer night and day? Luke ii. 37. It seemeth that the first that embraced religion in Philippi were women, Acts xvi. 13. Neither have they only been religiously affected, and such as feared God, and walked in his ways, but further, many have mainly stood for the defence of the gospel, and hazarded their lives. Examples we have in Priscilla, unto whom the apostle giveth this testimony, that for his life she laid down her own neck, Rom. xvi. 4; and likewise, in this place, of Euodias and Syntyche, of whom ye see the apostle saith, that they strove with him and others in the gospel, that it might have a freer passage, and that they might speak the word boldly. Seeing, then, that these things are written for your learning, judge with yourselves how religiously ye ought to be affected towards the truth of Christ Jesus. Let their examples stir up your holy minds, and let it not seem grievous unto you, with holy Mary, to sit you down at Jesus's foot, and hear him preaching in his ministers. Nay, let it not grieve you boldly to stand in the defence of the gospel of Christ Jesus, and if the will of the Lord be so, to lay down your lives for that truth which ye have learned and received in Christ Jesus. If ye

should look no further but unto examples of your own sex, ye might have sufficient incitement hereunto. As, therefore, at this day ye do, so go forward to receive with meekness that word which is able to save your souls. Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously, and let your religious minds be known unto all men.

Secondly, In the persons of Euodias and Syntyche, I note a breach and falling out, either betwixt themselves or betwixt them and the church; for in that he exhorteth them to be of one accord in the Lord, it is plain that there was a breach and falling out. Whence I observo, that the children of God, how religiously affected soever they be, yet so long as they live, are subject unto their falls, and are subject unto divers disordered affections, as anger, discord, and the like. We see how Peter and Barnabas were drawn on unto shrewd dissimulation for fear of the Jews, Gal. ii. 13. We see how the love of the world drew on Demas to forsake Paul for a time, and to embrace it, 2 Tim. iv. 10. We see how some have been almost seduced from the way of truth by false teachers, as it is like these two women were, if the breach were between them and the church. Again, we see such a heat and breach to have fallen out between Paul and Barnabas, as that they parted companies, the one going one way, and the other another way, Acts xv. 39; so that whom Satan had often sifted and winnowed before, now a very little matter and small occasion set them at very great odds. And many such falls and disordered affections are the children of God subject unto in this life, as might farther at large be proved. The reason is, because though they be led by the Spirit, yet are they not wholly guided by the Spirit, but sometimes they walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit.

Here, then, first, let the children of God learn to humble themselves, and to walk before the Lord with fear and trembling. The manifold falls and disordered affections whereunto they are subject may keep them in a reverent and son-like awe, that they presume not above that is meet; for by their falls they may see what strength there is in themselves to stand, if the Lord should not sustain and uphold them. As therefore the apostle exhorteth, so let all of us 'make an end of our salvation with fear and trembling;' fearing, but not doubting, because he is faithful which hath promised; standing in awe, but sinning not, even standing in awe, lest we do sin and displease the Lord.

Secondly, hence we may learn not presently sharply to censuro men upon their breaches or upon their falls, for they are no other things than do befall the children of God. Rather we are, if they be such as have made a good profession of the truth, in such cases to help them, as here our apostle speaks: first, to labour to raise them if they be fallen, and if they be at odds, to set them at one, even because of their

holy profession, lest the way of truth should be evil spoken of; for that our apostle makes the reason unto his faithful yoke-fellow, why he would have him to

help these godly women, and to set them at one, even because they were such as had striven with him in the gospel.

LECTURE LXXVI.

Whose names are written in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I say, Rejoice.—PHILIP. IV. 3, 4.

WE have heard the apostle's particular exhortations, first unto Euodias and Syntyche, ver. 2; secondly, unto his faithful yoke-fellow, ver. 3; unto Euodias and Syntyche, that they would be of one accord in the Lord; unto his faithful yoke-fellow, that he would be a means to set them at one, because they were such as, for their labour with him and other his fellow-labourers in the gospel, were worthy that he should do this for them.

One thing yet remaineth to be noted from the exhortation unto his faithful yoke-fellow, which is the apostle's affirmation of his fellow-labourers, that their names were in the book of life; whereby he meaneth that their life was as certainly sealed up with God as if their names had been written in a book to that purpose. For the better understanding of which phrase and manner of speech, first, we are to know that in the Scriptures there is mention made of three books attributed unto God: one, the book of God's providence; another, the book of God's judgment; a third, the book of life. The book of God's providence is his foreknowledge of all things before ever they were; and of this the psalmist speaketh where he saith, Ps. cxxxix. 16, 'Thine eyes did see me when I was without form; for in thy book were all things written, which in continuance were fashioned, when there was none of them before.' Where by the book of God is meant his foreknowledge, whereby he knew all things from everlasting. The book of God's judgment is his knowledge of all our thoughts, words, and works, which in the last day shall so clearly be presented unto us as if they were then read out of a book, and according to which he shall then judge us. And of this John speaketh, where he saith, Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw the dead, both great and small, stand before God: and the books were opened, and the dead were judged of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Where, by the books, is meant that knowledge of all our thoughts, words, and works, which God in the last judgment shall present unto every man's conscience, so clearly as if a man should open a book wherein they were all written, and distinctly read them out of that book. The third book, which is called the book of life, even of eternal life, is the everlasting foreknowledge of God, whereby he specially and particularly knew from everlasting who are his, and by a special care preserveth them unto life as certainly as if their names were registered in a book to that purpose. And of this the Holy Ghost maketh often mention in holy Scripture; as in

Exod. xxxii. 32, where Moses saith unto God, 'If thou wilt not pardon their sin, I pray thee raze me out of the book which thou hast written;' in the psalm, where David in great anguish of spirit prayeth thus against his persecutors, Ps. lxxix. 28, 'Let them be put out of the book of life, neither let them be written with the righteous;' in Isa. iv. 3, where the prophet saith, that 'he that shall remain in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written unto life in Jerusalem;' in Ezek. xiii. 9, where it is called the writing of the house of Israel; in Dan. xii. 1, where it is said, 'At that time shall thy people be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book;' in Luke x. 20, where our Saviour bids his disciples 'rejoice, because their names are written in heaven'; in the Apocalypse, iii. 5, where it is said, 'He that overcometh, shall be clothed in white array; and I will not put out his name out of the book of life;' and again, chap. xx. 15, 'Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire;' and again, where it is said, chap. xxi. 27, 'There shall enter into this city no unclean thing, neither whosoever worketh abomination or lies, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' Thus ye see mention of three books attributed unto God in the Scriptures, one of providence, another of judgment, and a third of life, which here our apostle speaketh of.

Secondly, We are to know that no material book is properly attributed unto God, as though he did write anything in a book, but only by a borrowed speech, borrowed from the manner of them that, for their better remembrance of things, write them in a book, so to imply that God knows all things, and that they are always had in remembrance before him, as if they were in a book. And therefore we defined his book of providence to be his foreknowledge of all things before ever they were, whereby he knew them as well from everlasting, as if they had been written in a book from everlasting. His book of judgment likewise we defined to be his knowledge of all our thoughts, words, and works, which in the last judgment he shall present unto every man's conscience so clearly as if they were all read out of a book, and according to which he shall then judge us. And lastly, the book of life we defined to be the everlasting foreknowledge of God, whereby he specially and particularly knew who are his, and by a special and peculiar care preserveth them unto life as certainly as if their names were billed in a book, and registered, to be had in remem-

brance before him for ever. So that mention of such books in the Scripture is not made in respect of God, as if he used, or needed to use, any book to any purpose; but for us, and for our understanding, that we, by the manner which we see used amongst men, may the better conceive and know that God knew all things from everlasting, that in the last day all things shall be naked in his sight, and that he knoweth all his by head, so that he hath a special care over them.

Those things thus noted, for the better understanding of the phrase and manner of speech here used by the apostle, let us now come a little nearer to the opening of the meaning of these words. The speech of the apostle is touching his fellow-labourers, which had laboured with him in the ministry when the church was first planted at Philippi, of whom he saith, that their names were in the book of life; whereby he meaneth, that they were of the number of those whom God had chosen in Christ Jesus unto everlasting life, so that their life was as surely sealed up with God as if he had taken their particular names, and written them in a book to remember them, and to give unto them that which he had purposed from everlasting. This being the meaning, it remaineth now that we see what observation we may gather hence for our further use.

But, first, a doubt is to be answered touching some contradiction which may seem to be between this of our apostle here and that of the same apostle, where it is said, 2 Tim. ii. 19, that 'the Lord only knoweth who are his.' For if the Lord alone know who are his, as there it is, then how doth he here say of his fellow-labourers, that their names were in the book of life, so plainly setting it down as if he knew it? Whereunto I answer, that albeit the apostle in the place unto Timothy only says, 'The Lord knoweth who are his,' as also our Saviour himself in another place saith, John xiii. 15, 'I know whom I have chosen'; yet in the truth of the thing it is true that he alone knoweth who are his, and that he alone knoweth whom he hath chosen, as that place in the Apocalypse makes more plain, Rev. ii. 17, where it is thus said, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the manna that is hid, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.' For hereby it is signified that no person living knoweth who are renewed in Christ Jesus unto righteousness and true holiness but God only, and the spirit of man which is in man. Thus, then, we say, that God alone knoweth who are his, and whom he hath chosen, absolutely and of himself; so that no man can absolutely and of himself say of another that he is the chosen of God, that his name is in the book of life. Yet may the Lord, and sometimes doth he, reveal unto his children that which he alone, absolutely and of himself, knoweth, as the revelations unto Abraham, Moses, and the prophets manifestly prove. And whether in that

abundance of revelations which the Lord shewed unto our apostle, and whereof he speaketh somewhere, 2 Cor. xii. 7, he had likewise some revelation touching the election of some, and the reprobation of others, I cannot affirm. Many are of opinion that the election of some, and the reprobation of others, were revealed by God unto him. And so it may be, that the Lord, who alone, absolutely and by himself, knew whether the names of those his fellow-labourers were written in the book of life, revealed by his Holy Spirit unto our apostle, that their names were written in the book of life.

But I rather think that here he thus spoke as he thought by the rule of charity. For, what saith the apostle, in another place, of charity? 1 Cor. xiii. 7, namely, that 'it believeth all things, and hopeth all things'; yea, and where it seeth certain fruits and effects of election and salvation, there it is certainly to be persuaded of election and salvation. Our apostle therefore, seeing how faithfully those his fellow-labourers had laboured in the work of the ministry with him, in the planting of the church at Philippi, how constantly they had walked in the truth, notwithstanding the great opposition that was against them, how unblameably they had had their conversation amongst men, in charity thus he judged, that their names were in the book of life. And this may very well stand with the other, that the Lord only knoweth who are his. For that which properly belongeth unto the Lord, absolutely and by himself to know whose names are in the book of life, that the apostle assumeth not to himself; but seeing the fruits of their election in their lives, he by the rule of charity thus judgeth of their salvation, that everlasting life was surely sealed up for them with God.

To come, then, unto my note, the thing which here I note, is the apostle's charitable judgment of his fellow-labourers in the gospel of Christ Jesus. By their fruits he judged that they were branches of the true vine; upon their holy profession and constant endeavour to increase the kingdom of Christ Jesus, he pronounceth that their names were written in the book of life. Whence, first, my observation in general is, that the children of God not only may and ought certainly to be persuaded of their own salvation in Christ Jesus, but further, that they are by the rule of charity to assure themselves of the salvation of such of their brethren as walk in the truth, having their conversation honest. For albeit this be most true, that not any can be so certain of any other man's election or salvation as of his own, because he feeleth only in himself the testimony of the Spirit witnessing unto his spirit that he is the son of God, and because only in himself he knoweth his faith towards God, and his love towards all saints, not only by the outward fruits thereof, but likewise by the inward motions thereof which he feels in his own soul, yet may the children of God by such outward fruits and effects of their

election as they shall see in their brethren, according to the rule of charity, judge that they are the chosen children of God, and heirs of salvation. So we see that the apostle, writing to the Romans, Coriuthians, Ephesians, writeth unto them as ‘ saints by calling,’ ‘ sanctified in Christ Jesus,’ ‘ chosen in him before the foundation of the world,’ and ‘ predestinated to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto God.’ And why did he thus judge of them? Even because of their communion with the saints in the gospel of Christ, because of the testification of their faith, and of their love towards all saints, whereby they shewed themselves to be partakers of the fatness of the true olive Christ Jesus. So Peter, writing unto the strangers that dwelt here and there throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, calleth them ‘ the elect of God.’ And why? Even because of their constant faith, constant love, and constant abiding in the church of Christ Jesus. So John calleth them unto whom he wrote, ‘ the sons of God;’ and the lady unto whom he wrote, ‘ the elect lady,’ because they continued in the church, and walked in the truth.

Do we then see in our brethren the outward fruits of an holy vocation, of regeneration and sanctification? Do we see them make an holy profession of the blessed truth of Christ Jesus, give good testimony of a sincere faith in Christ Jesus, walk in holy obedience towards God, and love towards their brethren, faithfully labour in the works of their calling, and denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world? Of such we may and are to persuade ourselves that they are reserved unto the same inheritance in heaven with us, and of them we may say, that they are the sons of God, elect in Christ Jesus our Lord unto eternal salvation, prepared to be shewed in the last times. And besides this, that the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the apostles warranteth us hereunto, the rule also of charity directeth us so to do. For, as before we heard, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, ‘ charity believeth all things, charity hopeth all things;’ which yet is not so to be understood, as if charity were foolish, rashly to believe everything that is told, and there to hope where there is no cause of hope; for that the wise man maketh a note of a foolish man, Prov. xiv. 15, where he thus saith, ‘ The foolish will believe everything.’ But so charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things, as that it keeps itself within the rule of piety, wisdom, and religion. If the thing displease God, be repugnant to the truth, be hurtful or disgraceful to any of God’s children, charity believeth it not, hopeth it not. But where there are good tokens of Christianity, plain figures of a sincere faith, evident testimonies of an holy obedience, there surely the rule of charity bids us believe and hope the best, and there we may be bold to say, that they are the sons of God, that their names are written in the book of life. And is it not our Saviour’s rule that we should judge of the tree by the fruit, Mat. vii. 18, for

that ‘ a good tree bringeth not forth evil fruit, nor an ill tree good fruit?’ If it bear grapes, will any man judge it to be a thorn? if it bring forth figs, will any man judge it to be a thistle? Nay, by the fruit the tree is known what it is; and if the fruit be good, it may thereby be known that the tree is good. Right so, if we have our fruit in righteousness and holiness, it may thereby be known that we are the branches of the true vine Christ Jesus. Whether, then, we look unto the example of the apostles, or unto the rule of charity which the apostles followed, or unto that rule of Christ, to discern of the tree by the fruit, we see that the children of God may not only persuade themselves of their own salvation in Christ Jesus, but further also may certainly judge of the salvation of their godly brethren.

Now see, men and brethren, the great necessity that there is that we should be thus persuaded one of another, even so great, as that without it, the bond of peace, love, and Christianity cannot be maintained. For how can we love them of whom we have no hope that they shall be heirs of the same salvation with us? How can we have peace with them of whom we are not persuaded that they are at peace with God? How can we pray with them, and say, ‘ Our father which art in heaven,’ touching whom we doubt whether God be their Father? How can we communicate in the Lord’s supper with them of whom we doubt whether they be joined with us in the same communion of saints? How can we live with them as with our brethren and beloved, if we doubt whether they be within the same covenant of grace with us? A shallow peace, and a shadow of love, and a semblance of Christianity there may be, but such as, under a colour, only deceiveth, and hath no soundness in it. It is this persuasion of our own minds touching our brethren, that they are in one covenant of grace with us, that they are members of the same mystical body of Christ Jesus with us, that they are heirs of the same salvation with us, that through one God, one faith, one baptism, one gospel of Christ Jesus, they and we shall reign together in one kingdom; it is this, I say, that links us in the true bond of peace, love, and Christianity; and either this must be, or else that cannot be.

If, then, we desire to be knit together in the true bond of peace, love, and Christianity, let us so walk that we may be thus persuaded one of another. As we are called to the knowledge of the truth, so let us walk in the truth, and let us keep fast the profession of our hope unto the end. Let us follow the truth in love, and in all things grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ, rooted and built in him, and stablished in the faith. Let our love one towards another abound yet more and more, in all knowledge and in all judgment. Let us have our conversation such as becometh the saints of God, and let us provide for things honest, not only before the Lord, but also before men. Thus shall we have a sure seal unto our

souls, thus shall we give a good testimony unto others, that we are the sons of God, and thus shall we be knit together in one mind and in one judgment, that we may walk together in the house of God as friends.

My next observation hence, is for the comfort of the minister in particular. The apostle, ye see, upon the faithful labours of those that had laboured with him in the preaching of the gospel at Philippi, pronounceth that their names were in the book of life. Whence I observe this for the comfort of the good minister of the gospel of Christ Jesus: if he have faithfully and painfully laboured in the work of the ministry, if he have in all good conscience instructed and admonished his people, and endeavoured to increase the kingdom of Christ Jesus, his reward is with God, and his life is as surely sealed up with God, as if his name were written in a book to that purpose. To which purpose is that also of the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 8, where he saith, 'Every man shall receive wages according to his labour.' Verse 14, 'If any man's work that he hath built upon abide, he shall receive wages;' which wages the apostle calleth elsewhere, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give him at that day.' Yea, but what if he labour all night, and catch nothing? What if he run in vain, and spend his strength in vain and for nothing amongst his people? Yet, Isa. xlix. 4, 5, 'is his judgment with the Lord, and his work with his God. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall he be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and his God shall be his strength.' So that, howsoever his labour be in vain unto them, yet shall it not be in vain in the Lord; though they be not taught, yet shall not he lose his reward. For, because he hath been 'faithful,' he shall 'enter into his master's joy,' Mat. xxv. 21. A good comfort, after he have borne the burden and heat of the day, to receive such a penny. But what part of this comfort hath he, that being set in the vineyard to dress it, neither hedgeth, nor ditcheth, nor gathereth out stones of it, nor planteth, nor watereth, but standeth all the day idle in it? No more than the watalman that giveth no warning, Ezek. iii. 18; no more than he that diggeth his talent in the earth, Mat. xxv. 30. This comfort belongeth unto him alone that laboureth.

Now see, then, men and brethren, what this should teach you. Is it so that the Lord rewardeth him that faithfully laboureth in the vineyard with everlasting life, but is angry with him that loitereth, even

unto death? Behold, then, what care the Lord hath over you, and what duty ye owe unto him again. For wherefore doth he send out the labourers unto you? Wherefore doth he so reward the labours of them that labour faithfully amongst you, and admonish you? Wherefore is he so angry with them that do not labour amongst you? Is it not for your sakes, that ye may be prepared an holy people unto the Lord, that ye may be instructed in righteousness unto salvation, and that no holy duty may be neglected towards you? Consider, then, with yourselves, what it is that the Lord looketh for from you, grapes or wild grapes? It is judgment and righteousness, mercy and truth, peace and love, integrity and holiness, that he looks for, and that he requires for such his loving-kindness towards you, for such his continual care over you. And if these things be amongst you and abound, then blessed shall ye be of the Lord, and ye shall eat of the fruit of your ways. But if he 'look for judgment and behold oppression, for righteousness and behold a crying,' for mercy and behold cruelty, for truth and behold falsehood, for peace and behold discord, for love and behold hatred, for integrity and behold dissimulation and hypocrisy, for holiness and behold profaneness and all kind of iniquity, then what remaineth but a removing of our candlestick out of his place? what but a fearful looking-for of judgment, wherein shall be indignation and wrath unto them that disobey the truth, and obey unrighteousness? Seeing, therefore, the Lord, in his tender care over us, sendeth forth labourers unto us, and so plentifully rewardeth their holy labours amongst us, let us again with all care consider what he requireth of us for such his care over us, and in all obedience address ourselves unto that duty. His will is, that we should hearken unto the voice of them that come in his name, and he hath in nothing so much delight as when his word is obeyed. His care over us, in sending his ministers unto us early and late, shall be repaid by us with a good duty towards him, if we will hearken and obey. Let us, therefore, hearken and obey, and so shall we reap unto ourselves a good reward. For he that plentifully rewardeth him that laboureth amongst us and admonisheth us, will also in like manner reward us, if in us the fruits of his labours grow up in righteousness and true holiness. And let this suffice to be spoken, by occasion of the apostle's affirmation touching his fellow-labourers, that their names are in the book of life.

LECTURE LXXVII.

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your patient mind be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.—PHILIP. IV. 4, 5.

HAVING spoken before of the apostle's exhortation unto the Philippians in general, and likewise of

his two particular exhortations, the one unto Eunodias and Syntyche, the other unto his faithful yoke-fellow;

the last day we spent that whole time in speaking of the apostle's affirmation touching his fellow-labourers, that their names were in the book of life, which the apostle addeth unto the end of his particular exhortation unto his faithful yoke-fellow.

Now, the apostle having made these particular exhortations unto those godly women Euodias and Syntyche, and unto his faithful yoke-fellow in their behalf, he goeth from those particularities, and again maketh sundry exhortations unto all the Philippians. The words which I have read unto you, ye see, are an exhortation unto the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord; where the thing whereunto he exhorteth, as ye see, is to rejoice: a thing which the sensual man can quickly lay hold on, who loves to rejoice, and to cheer himself in the days of his flesh; which yet might now seem unreasonable unto the Philippians, who lived in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, by whom they were hated even for the truth's sake which they professed. Mark, therefore, wherein the apostle would they should rejoice, namely, in the Lord. And here the sensual man, that haply would catch hold when it is said, *Rejoice*, by and by when it is added, *in the Lord*, will let his hold go. But they that, by reason of the billows and waves of the troublesome sea of this world, cannot brook the speech when it is said *Rejoice*, are to lay sure hold-fast npon it when it is added, *Rejoice in the Lord*; which hold-fast once taken, that they might for ever keep it sure, in the third place it is added, *Rejoice in the Lord always*, to note the constancy that should be in the Christian joy. Oh, but the apostle was not well advised of his speech, to exhort them to rejoice in the Lord alway. Not well advised? Yes, 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice in the Lord always.' He repeateth it, to make the better impression of a thing so needful. So that here we have the apostle's exhortation, to *rejoice*; but, *in the Lord*; not with a momentary or flitting joy, but *always*, both in weal and in woe; not unadvisedly delivered, or as a matter of no moment, but doubled, as seriously delivered, and to be hearkened unto. And let this suffice for a general view of the points of this exhortation, and for the meaning of the words. Now, let us see what notes arise hence for our own use.

The first thing which I note in this exhortation is, that the apostle exhorteth the Philippians to 'rejoice in the Lord, allowing and persuading joy and rejoicing, but so limiting it, that it be in the Lord; not only allowing it as lawful, but persuading it as requisite, that they should rejoice in the Lord. Whence I observe what the Christian man's rejoicing is, wherein he may and ought to rejoice: his rejoicing is, and may, and ought to be in the Lord. It is a common and ordinary objection against them that from their souls desire to be followers of the holy apostle in a sincere embracing of the truth of Christ Jesus, that they are melancholic men, sad and austere men, men

which can abide no mirth, which can away with no joy and rejoicing. But let them not deceive you. We say with Solomon, Prov. xv. 13, that 'a joyful heart maketh a cheerful countenance.' And again with the same, chap. xvii. 22, that 'a joyful heart canseth good health.' And with the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xxx. 22, that 'the joy of the heart is the life of man, and that a man's gladness is the prolonging of his days.' And therefore often with David, Ps. xlvi. 10, we say, 'Let mount Sion rejoice, and let the daughters of Judah be glad.' And again with the same David, Ps. xcvi. 5-7, we say, 'Sing, rejoice, and give thanks; sing to the harp with a singing voice, with psalms also, and sound of trumpets.' And with the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 16, we exhort all men in all places to 'rejoice evermore.' But here it is not as the world teacheth you, do we teach you to rejoice; and therefore the world speaketh all manner of evil sayings against us. For what is the world's rejoicing? The rich man he rejoiceth in his riches, and calleth his lands by his own name; the wise man he rejoiceth in his wisdom; the strong man in his strength; the ambitious man in his glory and honour; the sensual man in his filthy pleasures; the superstitious man in his superstitious ways; the man that stands upon his merits, in the works of his own hands; and, generally, worldly men in the ways of their own hearts, such as they do take pleasure and delight in; yea, 'foolishness,' as Solomon saith, Prov. xv. 21, 'is joy to him that is destitute of understanding;' that is, even sin and wickedness is a matter of mirth and delight to the wicked and ungodly man. Now such rejoicing, we tell you, is not good; like unto the rejoicing of him, Luke xii. 19, that having said unto his soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years; live at ease, eat, drink, and take thy pastime,' heard it by and by said unto him, ver. 20, 'Thou fool, this night will they fetch away thy soul from thee: and then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?' For as Zophar in Job saith, chap. xx. 5, 'The rejoicing of the wicked is short, and the joy of hypocrites is but a moment.' And our Saviour pronounceth a woe upon such rejoicing, saying, Luke vi. 25, 'Woe be to you that now laugh, for ye shall weep and wail.' And as our apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 10, saith of 'worldly sorrow,' that it 'causeth death,' so may it most truly be said of worldly rejoicing, that it causeth death. And therefore with Amos, chap. vi. 4-6, we lift up our voices against them that 'lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their beds, and eat the lambs of the flock, and the calves out of the stall; that sing to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the best ointments: and in the mean time are not sorry for the affliction of Joseph.' And out of Jeremiah, chap. ix. 23, we exhort all men in all places, saying, 'Let not the wise man glory in

his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, neither the rich man glory in his riches.' And out of David, Ps. lxi. 10, 'If riches increase, let no man set his heart upon them.' And thus we wean men from this worldly rejoicing as much as we can.

What is, then, the rejoicing which we teach? As the apostle saith of sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 10, that there is 'a worldly sorrow which causeth death,' and a godly sorrow which causeth repentance unto salvation; so I say of rejoicing, that there is a worldly rejoicing, when men take more pleasure in the vanities of this life and the pleasures of sin than in the things which belong unto their peace, which causeth death; and a godly rejoicing, when men rejoice in the Lord so that they put their whole confidence in him, and count all things loss and dung in comparison of that rejoicing which they have in him, which causeth confidence unto salvation. The rejoicing, then, which we teach, is not the worldly rejoicing which the world teaches, and which causeth death, but the godly rejoicing which causeth confidence unto salvation. We say that ye may, and that ye ought to rejoice in the Lord. So the Holy Ghost often exhorteth us to do, and so the godly have always done. 'Be glad, O ye righteous,' saith David, Ps. xxxii. 12, 'and rejoice in the Lord.' And again, Ps. cxlix. 2, 'Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, and let the children of Sion be joyful in their king.' 'Let him that rejoiceth,' saith the apostle out of the prophet, 'rejoice in the Lord,' 1 Cor. i. 31. And in the former chapter, 'My brethren,' saith the apostle, 'rejoice in the Lord.' So did the church, in Isaiah, saying, chap. lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,' &c. So did Mary, saying, Luke i. 47, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.' So Peter, 1 Pet. i. 8, giveth testimony to the strangers to whom he wrote, that they rejoiced in the Lord, 'with joy unspeakable and glorious.' And so the godly have always rejoiced in the Lord, as in the only rock of their defence, and strong God of their salvation.

And now see, besides these exhortations and examples so to do, what great cause we have to rejoice in the Lord, and how little cause there is to rejoice in anything else; for what have we that we have not from him? or what want we, which if we have, he must not supply? Have we peace in all our quarters, and plenteousness in all our houses? Have we a blessing in the fruit of our body, in the fruit of our ground, in the fruit of our cattle, in the increase of our kine, and in our flocks of sheep? Are our wives fruitful as the vine, and our children like the olive branches round about our tables? Have we health, strength, food, raiment, and other necessaries of this life? And whence are all these things? James i. 17, 'Every good giving, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-

ness, neither shadowing by turning.' But to come nearer unto the causes of Christian rejoicing, Doth the Spirit witness unto our spirit, that we are the sons of God? Is the darkness of our understandings lightened, the frowardness of our wills corrected, the corruption of our affections purged? Do we feel in ourselves the virtue of Christ his resurrection, by the death of sin, and the life of God in ourselves? Are our souls fully assured of the free forgiveness of our sins by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Dare we go boldly unto the throne of grace, and cry, *Abba*, which is, *Father*? Do we know that death shall not have dominion over us, and that hell shall never be able to prevail against us? Behold, then, what cause we have of our rejoicing in the Lord, for abundance of spiritual blessings in heavenly things, for our election in Christ Jesus unto everlasting life before the foundation of the world, for our creation in time after his own image in righteousness and true holiness, for our redemption by the blood of Christ Jesus, when we, through sin, had defaced the image wherein we were created, and sold ourselves as bond slaves unto Satan, for our vocation unto the knowledge of the truth by the gospel of Christ Jesus, for our adoption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, for our justification and free forgiveness of our sins by the blood of Christ Jesus, for our sanctification by the Spirit of grace unto some measure of righteousness and holiness of life, for our regeneration unto a lively hope in Christ Jesus, and for the assured confidence which we have of our glorification after this life with Christ Jesus, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, &c.: all graces of God's Spirit, and for them all such matter of rejoicing in the Lord, as may make our hearts dance for joy, and may ravish our souls with gladness.

And as we have all things from the Lord that we have, whether for the body or for the soul, for this life present or for that that is to come; so, what is it that we want which he doth not supply? Want we riches? 1 Sam. ii. 7, 'The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich:' and he is 'rich unto all them that call upon him' faithfully. Want we preferment? Ps. lxxv. 6, 'Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south. God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.' Want we wisdom? James i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth unto all men liberally, and reproacheth no man, and it shall be given him.' Want we patience in troubles? That is the wisdom which James specially speaks of in the place mentioned, wisdom patiently to endure whatsoever God layeth upon us, which ye see God liberally giveth to them that lack and ask. Want we comfort in our souls? Rom. xv. 5, God is the 'God of patience and consolation,' which 'comforteth us in all our troubles,' and turneth our heaviness into joy; as also himself

saih, saying, Jer. xxxi. 18, ‘I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and give them joy for their sorrows.’ Yea, whatsoever it is that we want, it is the Lord that must supply our wants; Ps. cxlv. 16, ‘He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness,’ such as he best knoweth to be most meet for them, and good for his glory. ‘The Lord will give grace and glory,’ saith the psalmist in another place. Ps. lxxxiv. 11, ‘and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly’: no good thing which he knoweth to be good for them, and also good for his glory. Have we, then, whatsoever blessings we have from the Lord, and doth the Lord supply whatsoever we want, so far forth as he sees it to be expedient for us, and good for his own glory? See, then, what cause we have to rejoice in the Lord.

Yea, and what cause is there why we should rejoice in any thing but in the Lord? Riches, honour, strength, beauty, and whatsoever else the world most esteemeth of, what is it else but vanity, and vexation of the spirit? Amongst other things most precious in the life of man, wisdom is more to be sought after than gold and silver, and not to be weighed with precious stones; righteousness most commendeth man unto man, and holiness most commendeth man unto God. And yet what is our wisdom, what is our righteousness, what is our holiness, that we should rejoice in them? Be it that we have the wisdom of Solomon; be it that we be as righteous as Noah, Daniel, and Job; be it that we be as holy as David, the holy prophets and apostles; yet for all this, if we will come unto God, we must lay all these aside, and Christ Jesus he must be our wisdom, and righteousness, and holiness. Whatsoever our wisdom be, it will not lead us unto God; whatsoever our righteousness be, it will not present us righteous before God; whatsoever our holiness be, we cannot stand in it in the judgment before God. Nay, when we come unto God, we must renounce our wisdom as foolishness, we must count our righteousness loss and dung, we must abandon all conceit of holiness, as also we see our apostle did: who, though he were of the kindred of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, by profession a pharisee, as zealous of the tradition of his fathers as any, and as unrebukeable touching the righteousness of the law as any, yet when once he came to the knowledge of Christ, he counted all these things as no vantage at all unto him, but loss and dung, for Christ his sake. For herein is our rejoicing, that ‘Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,’ as it is written, 1 Cor. i. 30. Nay, to go yet further, what are our faith, hope, and love, that we should rejoice in them? To be strong in faith, to be perfect in love, to be stedfast in hope, are things for which we should pray always with all manner [of] prayer and supplication in the spirit. But if we shall rejoice and repose our confidence in the strength of our faith, in

the perfection of our love, in the stedfastness of our hope, then we are abolished from Christ, and our rejoicing is not good. It is Christ Jesus in whom we must believe, whom we must love, and in whom we must hope. Our faith must be built upon him, our love must be grounded on him, our hope must be established in him, and in him we must rejoice. Thus, then, we see that we have not anything to rejoice in without us, nor yet in our wisdom, righteousness, or holiness, nor yet in our faith, hope, or love. We must rejoice in the Lord, and in him it well becometh the saints to be joyful.

Let me therefore, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, beseech you to rejoice, not as the world doth in the pleasures of sin, and the vanities of this life, but to rejoice in the Lord, the strong God of our salvation. Ye see the exhortations of the Holy Ghost, and the examples of godly men, and ye see what great cause we have to rejoice in the Lord, and how little cause we have to rejoice in anything else. All rejoicing in the world, what is it in comparison of this rejoicing in the Lord? It is as the morning cloud, or as the morning dew, it vanisheth away; or as it is in the place of Job, ‘It is short, and but a moment.’ Nay, in it only is true joy and sound rejoicing. Other joys may for a while please the outward sense, but the joy that quickens the heart, and cheers the soul, is the joy in the Holy Ghost. Other rejoicing, the more it is, the worse it is; but this, the more it is, the better it is: and the more we do rejoice in the Lord, the more cause we shall find we have to rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice, therefore, in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

The second thing which I note in the apostle’s exhortation is, that he exhorts the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord, not for a day, or for a season, not by fits, or when he makes his face to shine on them, but to ‘rejoice in the Lord always,’ as well in adversity as in prosperity. Whence I observe the constancy which is in Christian rejoicing, whereby it is known indeed to be Christian. The constancy of our Christian rejoicing is, to rejoice in the Lord always, as well when he seemeth to hide away his face from us as when he maketh his face to shine upon us. This constancy of rejoicing the apostle exhorteth the Thessalonians unto, where he saith unto them, 1 Thes. v. 16, ‘Rejoice evermore.’ And herein is the trial of our joy, whether it be Christian indeed; for as it is said of some hearers of the word, Luke viii. 13, that ‘for a while they believe, but in time of temptation they go away,’ so may it also be said of some that seem to rejoice in the Lord, that for a while they seem to rejoice in the Lord, even as long as he showereth down the early and the latter rain upon them, but in time of persecution, trouble, and adversity, they hang down their heads, and murmur against the Lord. It seemeth that Satan thought that Job would have been such an one, as appeareth by these words, Job. i. 10, where

he saith unto God, 'Doth he fear God for nought?' And the same may be said of rejoicing, ver. 11, 'Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the works of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But stretch out now thy hand, and touch all that he hath, to see if he will not blaspheme thee to thy face.' But he was deceived in Job. Yet therein he bewrayed a disease wherewith many sons of men are much tainted, which are never known what they are until the Lord send them some adversity; for we see many, that so long as they have all things at their desire, rejoice in the Lord; who so much as they? specially, when their dishes are well furnished. Oh, then, how well doth it like them, to confess that he is good, and gracious, and bountiful! But if the Lord begin to handle them somewhat roughly, so that things fall not out to their contentment, then their countenance is changed, and they take the matter sore to heart. And if he proceed, and depriving them of his blessings, afflet them in body or in goods, then they fall to murmur, and oftentimes to blasphemies: which blasphemies, albeit some of them utter not with their mouths, yet in their heart repine they at the Lord, for such his judgments upon them. Now these in trial prove plainly to be hypocrites, and by trial it appeareth that their joy is not Christian, because it is not constant, but ebbeth and floweth according to the ebb and flood of adversity and prosperity.

What shall we say then? When the Lord afflicteth us with poverty, sickness, and the like crosses, must we rejoice in the Lord? Yea, verily; for, 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7, 'it is the Lord that killeth and maketh alive, that woundeth and healeth, that bringeth to the grave and raiseth up, that maketh poor and maketh rich, that bringeth low and exalteth.' 'There is no evil in the city which the Lord hath not done,' Amos iii. 6. No evil; that is, no cross or affliction, no plague or punishment, which he sendeth not. And whatsoever cross or affliction it is, unto his children it is but either a probation, 'that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, may be found to their praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ,' such as was Job's affliction; or else it is a fatherly correction, that 'being chastened of the Lord, they may not be condemned with the world;' such as was the death of David's child for David's sin, 2 Sam. xii. 14, and such as was the weakness, and sickness, and death of many of the Corinthians, for eating and drinking unworthily at the Lord's table, 1 Cor. xi. 30. Are, then, our crosses of poverty, sickness, or whatsoever they be, from God? Then are they good, and we are to rejoice in them. For all things fall out for the best for those that love and fear him. Are they for the trial of our faith? 'My brethren,' saith James, chap. i. 2, 'count it exceeding joy when ye fall into divers temptations and trials.' &c. Are they to correct and chastise us?

Heb. xii. 7, 'If we endure chastening, God offereth himself unto us as unto sons, for whom he loveth he chasteneth.' Oh but sometimes he shutteth us even up in despair and infidelity; how shall we then rejoice in the Lord? I demand then, Dost thou know it, and loathe it, and long to be brought again into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Thou hast good cause to rejoice in the Lord, for he hath only hid his face from thee for a while, that he may have mercy on thee for ever. And what if thy faith or hope be but as a grain of mustard seed? what if being, as it were, covered under the ashes, they seem not to be? Christ Jesus is most plentiful to help them that are most weak, and he is all-sufficient to supply all wants. If any seed of God be there, in thy weakness he will perfect his praise. Yea, but in that our Saviour pronounceth a blessing upon them that mourn, Mat. v. 4, it appeareth that we are not always to rejoice. Not so neither, for even then when we sigh and mourn for the affliction we have in the world, we are to rejoice in the Lord, and to be of good comfort in Christ Jesus, because he hath overcome the world; even then, when we mourn through a sense of God's judgments, we are to rejoice in his tender mercies, that he deals not with us after our deservings; even then, when we moan in the body because of affliction, we are to rejoice in our souls because of our strong consolation in Christ Jesus, and because our light affliction in the body causeth unto us a far most excellent and an eternal weight of glory. And therefore our Saviour in the same place, where he saith, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' exhorteth also to 'rejoice and be glad' in persecution, for that 'great is our reward in heaven.'

Let this, then, teach us to take heed how we murmur against the Lord, for poverty, sickness, or any cross whatever. They are from the Lord, whatsoever they be; and if we be his children, they are only either for the trial of our faith and patience, that patience having her perfect work, we may be 'perfect and entire, lacking nothing'; or else, as a loving correction of a merciful father, that we may be reclaimed from the wickedness of our ways. And if we do not now rejoice in the Lord, when he seemeth thus to hide his face from us, certainly whatsoever show we made before of rejoicing in the Lord, we played but the hypocrites. Howsoever therefore, looking unto ourselves, unto our sins, unto our infirmities, unto our afflictions, unto the world, we may sigh and mourn, yet let us rejoice in the Lord. We are not bid to rejoice in ourselves; nay, in ourselves we shall be sure to have cause enough of mourning. We must, therefore, go out of ourselves unto the Lord, and we must rejoice in him. We must look unto him, and remember that he is good, and therefore whatsoever he doth is good; that he is almighty, and therefore can raise us out of the dust of death, and set us with the princes of the earth; that he is merciful, and therefore will not suffer the rod of the ungodly to rest on the lot of

the righteous. And again, we must remember that he was poor, that we might be made rich in him; that he was weak, that we might be made strong in him; that he was tempted, that he might be able to succour them which are tempted. What cause, therefore, soever of mourning there be in ourselves, let us look

out of ourselves, and let us rejoice in him always. If he bless us, then we think and yield easily that we have cause to rejoice in the Lord: and if he cross us with any plague or trouble, then we have also cause to rejoice in him, because it is for our good and his own glory. Rejoice, therefore, in the Lord always.

LECTURE LXXVIII.

Again, I say, Rejoice. Let your patient mind be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.—PHILIP. IV. 4, 5.

THESE words are (as we heard the last day) an exhortation unto the Philippians to rejoice, not as the world doth, but to 'rejoice in the Lord;' not with a momentary and flitting joy, but 'always,' both in weal and in woe; not unadvisedly made, or about a light and easy matter, but seriously made, and about a matter very needful, and yet hard to be persuaded, and therefore doubled, 'Again I say, Rejoice in the Lord always.'

Now, see how it pleaseth the Lord, that as the apostle comes again and again unto this holy exhortation, and leaves it not with once or twice, but even the third time also exhorteth them to rejoice in the Lord, so I should come unto you again and again, even several times, with the same exhortation to rejoice in the Lord. 'Again,' saith the apostle, 'I say, Rejoice, even in the Lord always,' for that is to be added, and resumed to the former place. From which doubling and redoubling of this exhortation, I observe both how needful and withal how hard a matter it is to persuade this constant rejoicing in the Lord, to rejoice in the Lord always. For to this end doth the Holy Ghost often in the Scriptures use to double and redouble his speech, even to shew both the needfulness of his speech, and the difficulty, in respect of man, of enforcing his speech. In the psalm, how often doth the prophet exhort the faithful unto the praises of the Lord, even before all the people, that they and their posterity might know them, saying, Ps. cvii., 'Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men!' Even four several times in that one psalm. And wherefore, but to shew how needful it was that they should do so, and how hardly men are drawn to do so? How often likewise doth our Saviour exhort his disciples unto humility and meekness! sometimes saying unto them, Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me that I am meek and lowly in heart;' sometimes telling them, chap. xx. 26, that whosoever among them would be great, should be servant unto the rest; sometimes washing their feet, &c., thereby to teach them humility, John xiii. And wherefore doth he so often beat upon it, but to shew how needful it was they should be humble and meek, and likewise how hard a thing it is to draw men unto humility and meekness? How often likewise doth

the Holy Ghost exhort to the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new man! No part of Scripture throughout the whole Bible, wherein the Holy Ghost doth not speak much, though not haply in these words, yet to this purpose. And wherefore else is it, but to imply both how needful a matter it is to be persuaded, and how hard a matter it is to persuade the mortification of the old man, and the quickening of the new man? And to let other instances pass, in point whereof we now speak, how oft doth our Saviour exhort to rejoice and be glad in persecution, Mat. v. 12, because of the reward laid up for us by God in heaven; to rejoice because our names are written in heaven by the finger of God's own hand, Luke x. 20; to be of good comfort, because he hath overcome the world, John xvi. 33; that is, to rejoice in the Lord. And wherefore, but to shew how needful it is to rejoice in the Lord, and how hard it is to persuade this rejoicing? So that by the usual course of the Scripture it appeareth, that our apostle, doubling and redoubling this his exhortation, thereby sheweth both how needful, and withal how hard a matter it is to persuade this constant rejoicing in the Lord, to rejoice in the Lord always; so needful, that it must be persuaded again and again, and withal so hard to be persuaded, that it cannot be too much urged and beaten upon.

But it will not be amiss yet a little more particularly to look into the reasons why it is so needful to rejoice in the Lord always, and why we are so hardly persuaded to rejoice in the Lord always. Who seeth not, that considereth anything, what mighty enemies we have always to fight withal, the flesh within us to snare and deceive us, the world without us to fight and wage war against us, and the devil ever seeking like a roaring lion whom he may devour? Who seeth not what fightings without, what terrors within, what anguishes in the soul, what griefs in the body, what perils abroad, what practices at home, what troubles we have on every side? When, then, Satan, that old dragon, casts out many floods of persecution against us; when wicked men cruelly, disdainfully, and spitefully speak against us; when lying, slandering, and deceitful mouths are opened upon us; when we are mocked and jested at, and had in derision of all them that are about us; when we are afflicted,

tortmented, and made the world's wonder ; when the sorrows of death compass us, and the floods of wickedness make us afraid, and the pains of hell come even unto our soul : what is it that holds up our heads that we sink not ? How is it that we stand either not shaken, or if shaken, yet not cast down ? Is it not by our rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus ? Yes, verily, we lift up our eyes unto heaven, and we are of good comfort, because he hath overcome the world ; we lift up our eyes unto the Lord, and we rejoice in him, because he shall give a good end unto all our troubles, and shall wipe all tears from our eyes. In David's troubles, he was all his stay, as himself everywhere almost protesteth ; and when the apostles were persecuted, beaten, and cast in prison, they rejoiced, because of their strong consolation in Christ Jesus. And so it is with all the faithful children of God, whatsoever floods do beat upon them, whatsoever causes of sorrow do overtake them, yet do they stand and quail not, because of the rejoicing they have in Christ Jesus. On this rock all the surges of the sea of this world are broken.

Again, when others of us are assaulted by that mighty prince of darkness, when we are tried by mockings and scourgings, by bonds and imprisonment ; when we feel the smart of loss, or hurt in body, goods, or name ; when the beast of Spain, and with him that false prophet of Rome, thunder out threatenings, and imagine all kind of mischief against us ; when the pains of death take hold of us, and multitude of sorrows beset us round about, why is it that our hearts do fail within us ? How is it that we fall from our former love, and that fear cometh upon us as upon a woman in her travail ? Is it not through our want of rejoicing in the Lord ? Yes, verily, we feel not in our souls the treasures of mercies that are hid for us in Christ Jesus, which should keep us standing against all batteries and assaults whatsoever, and therefore we are not only daunted and dismayed with these things, but are quite affright and utterly overcome of them. If any one of Job's afflictions lie upon us, we break out into all the impatiencies that he did, but we cannot lay hold of any such comforts as he did. If death seize upon son or daughter, or any dear unto us, we break out into like outcries with David, 2 Sam. xviii. 33, saying, 'Absalom my son, my son Absalom ! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son !' but though Joab would, yet can he not comfort us as he did David. If Haman do but fear the king's displeasure, Esther vi. 12, he hastes him home mourning, and covers his head, and will not be comforted ; and if Ahithophel do but see that his counsel be not followed, 2 Sam. xvii. 23, he saddles his ass, and rides home, and hangs himself. And thus it is when men have not their comfort in God, whatsoever do befall them in this life. If this or that thwart them, by and by they are cast down. And why ? Even because they have not learned to rejoice in the Lord

alway. Very needful, then, it is, ye see, that we rejoice in the Lord always, both because by our rejoicing which we have in the Lord, we stand against whatsoever otherwise might quell us, and because through the want thereof it is that we fall and are utterly overcome, whensoever storms arise and troubles assault us.

And as thus it may appear how needful a thing it is that we rejoice in the Lord always, so it may easily also be seen how hardly we are persuaded to rejoice in the Lord always. Every man complaineth where his shoe pincheth him, and every man lays his hand upon his sore. But very few in such cases, when the hand of the Lord is upon them, when they are humbled and brought low through oppression, through any plague or trouble, can be brought unto this, to rejoice in the Lord. Nay, tell the wicked and ungodly man, when his troubles are multiplied, and when his sorrows are increased, that he is to know that the Lord his hand is in all these, that he is not to murmur against the Lord, but to rejoice in the Lord ; doth he not say of them that thus speak unto him, that they are mad ? doth he not with indignation ask, what cause he hath to rejoice in the Lord ? doth he not still cry out upon his crosses, and miseries, and vexations, and pains ? and doth he not within a while belch out most impious blasphemies ? And hence it is that many with Judas in such cases fall to despair, and that many with him become their own butchers. Yea, let the children of God themselves say, whether their afflictions and their sorrows do not sometimes sink them so far, that their soul even almost refuseth comfort in the Lord ; very few like unto Job, that mirror of patience, who when they hear of the loss of all their goods, and of their servants, and of the death of their children, can be content to frame themselves to the will of God, and say, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return again : the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job i. 21. Or when they are smitten with sores and boils, from the sole of their foot to the crown of their head, can with the same Job comfort themselves, and say, chap. ii. 10, 'What ! shall we receive good at the hands of God, and not receive evil ?' And yet this most rare pattern of patience, into what sharp fits of impatience did he sometimes break out, crying out in the bitterness of his soul, and saying, iii. 3, 4, &c., 'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, There is a man-child conceived,' &c. And thus it fareth often with the dear children of God, that they sink so far, that their soul almost refuseth comfort in the Lord. Their sense and feeling of their pain and affliction is sometimes so great, that they have almost no sense or feeling of God. Which yet I do not so speak, as if the children of God might not be touched with sorrow and heaviness for the crosses of this life ; for no doubt they may ;

but to shew that sometimes they are so cast down with heaviness, that it is a hard matter to rear them up again. For as Job's friends disputed against him, so they against themselves, that they are punished of God for their sins and iniquities, and that therefore now he hath shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure. And then they stand prying and looking into their sins, and hardly can they be drawn to lift up their eyes unto the Lord, that in him they may find comfort unto their souls. I will not stand upon the further enlarging of this point. By this which hath been spoken, ye see how needful it is we should rejoice in the Lord always, and withal how hardly we are persuaded to rejoice in the Lord always, and consequently upon what cause the apostle doubled and redoubled this his exhortation.

New, this may first instruct us in the merciful goodness of God towards us, who in things so needful for us, and whereunto we are so hardly drawn, ceaseth not to stir up our dull minds, and again and again to call them to our remembrance: Isa. xxviii. 10, ‘Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line unto line, line unto line, here a little and there a little.’ Even as young scholars are dealt withal, so dealeth he with us, he goeth over and over the same lesson with us, and gladly he would beat it into us.

Secondly, This may teach us our dulness to conceive, and slackness to embrace the things that belong unto our peace. Such things must be doubled and redoubled unto us, and yet we will not learn them; they must be often urged, and much beaten upon, and yet we will not receive instruction. The Lord must even draw us unto himself by his Holy Spirit, and yet we will not run after him; he must send his holy prophets and ministers unto us early and late, and all little enough to stir up our dull minds.

Thirdly, This may teach us to hold fast that rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus. For is it so, that the holy apostle doth so often exhort us to rejoice in the Lord always; is it so, that it is so needful for us to rejoice in the Lord always, that only, by our rejoicing in him, we stand fast against whatsoever troubles and sorrows, and without it, we are quite affright and utterly overcome of them; is it so, that we are so hardly drawn to rejoice in the Lord always? How are we, then, to hold fast that rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus, even so fast, that nothing take it from us? Let us therefore rejoice, but let us rejoice in the Lord, and let us rejoice in him always, that so no man, nay, that nothing take from us our rejoicing in him. ‘A joyful heart maketh a cheerful countenance,’ and if the heart be joyful in the Lord, it cheers the heart and quickens the soul, howsoever the countenance be appalled. Other joys, in riches, in honours, in friends, in the vanities of this life, and in the pleasures of sin, haply have their moment of time and their appearance of good; but their time is but only a moment, and their good but only an appearance and outward sem-

blance: only the rejoicing in the Lord is the true and sound rejoicing, and which causeth good health unto the soul. Let us therefore rejoice in the Lord, and let us rejoice in him always, not only when he feedeth us with the flour of wheat, but when he giveth us plenteousness of tears to drink. For whether he bless us or cross us, it is for our good and his glory, and therefore he is to be blessed in both. Yea, and whatsoever crosses or sorrows we suffer, let that remembrance of Christ his blessed death and passion, which this day we celebrate, be sufficient to cause us to rejoice in the Lord. For what are all our sufferings or sorrows unto those benefits of Christ his death and passion, whereof this day may put us in mind, and which this day shall be sealed unto the souls of those which are worthy communicants in this holy supper. For when this is sealed unto our souls in this holy supper, that Christ died for us, that by his blood we receive remission of our sins, that we are incorporated into his mystical body, and made one with him and he with us, that he hath obtained eternal redemption for us, and that in Christ are treasured up for us all the benefits of our salvation, even as surely as we are sure of the bread and wine which we receive into our bodies at this supper, what sorrows for any crosses should so far sink us, but that we should recover ourselves by our rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus? For though hell itself should open her mouth upon us, though sorrow itself should seek to swallow us up quick, yet still here is matter enough wherein to rejoice. Rejoice, therefore, in the Lord alway; again I say, Rejoice. Thus much of this exhortation. It followeth:—

Let your patient mind, &c. This is also an exhortation unto the Philippians, wherein the apostle exhorteth them not only to such a patience as is tried and seen in bearing injuries and putting up wrongs, but generally into such a moderate, courteous, easy, and gentle behaviour towards their neighbours and brethren, as that they will rather lose of their right than not live in peace and unity with them. For so the word here used signifieth, namely, a moderation of that by equity which in rigour might be exacted. The word is sometimes translated as if we should read thus in this place, ‘Let your courteous mind,’ &c., as in the Acts, Acts xxiv. 4, where Paul saith unto Felix, ‘I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy courtesy a few words.’ And in the first epistle of Peter, ii. 18, where he saith, ‘Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and courteous, but also to the froward.’ Sometimes it is translated as if we should thus read, ‘Let your gentle mind,’ &c., as in the second epistle to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. x. 1, ‘I beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ;’ and in the first epistle to Timothy, 1 Tim. iii. 3, where it is said that ‘a bishop must not be given to filthy lucre, but gentle.’ And sometimes, again, it is translated as if we should

thus read. ‘ Let your soft mind,’ &c., as in the epistle to Titus, Tit. iii. 2, where he willeth Titus to put his people in mind ‘ that they be no fighters, but soft, shewing all meekness to all men.’ But it comes all to one whether we read, Let your ‘ patient,’ or your ‘ courteous,’ or your ‘ gentle,’ or your ‘ soft’ mind be known unto all men. The thing which he exhorteth them unto, is such a mildness of their behaviour, and moderation of their affections among their neighbours and brethren, as that, for unity’s sake, they will rather lose of their own, than strictly stand upon their right in matters of this life. And this their mildness and moderation among their neighbours he would have so notorious and evident, that it might be known, and that to all men; not for matter of ostentation and vain-glory amongst men, but that, holding out this light to all men in their lives, they may be won unto the faith of Christ, and the name of God may be glorified. And because the Philippians might haply thus object and say, Yea, indeed, must we put up injuries, must we not stand upon our right, but sometimes yield of our right? Then shall we make a hand indeed, and quickly be the meanest among men, and be trampled under feet, as the clay in the streets. Therefore the apostle addeth, ‘ The Lord is at hand;’ as if he should have said, Though they do abuse your patient mildness, and gentle moderation of your affections, yet do ye hold on this good course, and possess your souls in patience; for ‘ the Lord is at hand,’ even near, to avenge you of your wrongs, and to repay you with glory. So that here we have an exhortation and a reason. The exhortation is, to bring them to a gentle moderation of their affections towards their brethren in matters of ordinary life. The reason is, to prevent an objection. Now, then, that we see the meaning of the words, and the special points, together with the purpose of the apostle therein, let us further see what we may observe hence for our own use.

The first thing which I note in the exhortation is, that the apostle exhorteth the Philippians to a gentle moderation of their affections towards their brethren in matters of ordinary life, so that, for the keeping of unity, sometimes they yield of their right. Whence I observe a necessary rule for all Christians, to be kept for ever in all their dealings with their neighbours, which is, in matters of ordinary life, to use such moderation of their affections, as that, for unity’s sake, they do not always strictly stand upon their right, but sometimes yield of their right, and sit them down with the loss, and patiently put up the wrong. A notable pattern of the practice of this rule we have in Abraham, who, in the strife that was between his herdmen and Lot’s herdmen, and was like to be between him and Lot, Gen. xiii. 8, 9, resigned his own right to buy peace, saying unto Lot, ‘ I pray thee, let there be no strife between thee and me, nor between mine herdmen and thine herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Depart,

I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou go to the right hand, then I will go to the left.’ He was Lot’s elder, and his uncle, and every way his better, yet he stood not upon these points, looking when Lot should come unto him, and stoop to him; but in great mildness and patience he so moderates his affections, as that he goes unto him, and moves the peace, and yields his own right to have it. Another pattern hereof we have figured in that parable in the Gospel, Mat. xviii. 24, 27, in the example of the king, who, calling his servants to an account, and finding one that owed him ten thousand talents, but had nothing to pay, forgave him his debt. He stood not upon it that so much he owed, and so much he should pay, or else his body should rot in prison for it; but finding him poor, and not able to pay, he remitted his right, and forgave him the debt. And thus should we do in matters of ordinary life, and civil dealing one with another; we should be kind and courteous one towards another, shewing all meekness and mildness one towards another; we must not stand upon terms one with another, but we must yield one unto another; we must sustain some loss one at another’s hands, we must put up some wrongs one at another’s hands. I say in matters of ordinary life and civil dealing one with another; for in matters of faith and religion, in matters belonging unto God, there we must not yield an inch to any adversary of the truth, to turn any whit from the rule of the word, either to the right hand or to the left. Here we must be at strife as Moses was with Pharaoh, Exod. x. 28, when he told him that they would have all their cattle with them, and that they would not leave an hoof behind them; for here to yield a whit, is to quench that zeal which ought to be in us towards the glory of our God. But in matters of common life, there we should yield, and rather sustain loss and wrong than nourish jars and quarrels.

But what is our practice? Ye know that in the parable of the servant that had all his debt forgiven him, how, meeting with his fellow that owed him an hundred pence, he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Mat. xviii. 28, ‘ Pay me that thou owest;’ and when he could not, he cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So we, if we think that we have right on our side, we stand upon it; and what? who is he? shall we yield of our right? so we may be counted fools indeed. Shall we sit down with the loss? Nay, we will have it, if he have it out of his belly. Shall we put up such a wrong? Nay, then, let them abuse me at their pleasures. We are as good as they, we are their betters every way; or though we be meaner than they, yet shall they not think to have us under their girdles. We may not, we cannot, we will not suffer these and these things. This is our practice, quite contrary to the rule before mentioned, and to those good patterns before proposed. We make a jest of that of our Saviour, where

he saith, Mat. v. 39, ‘ Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;’ and we say, whosoever gives me a blow, he shall have two for it, or at least he shall have as good as he brings; so far are we from that mind, to sustain any loss, or to put up any wrong. And hereupon it is that we are so unpeaceable one with another, and so uncharitable one towards another. Hereupon it is that there are such heart-burnings, grudgings, jars, debates, contentions, and divisions amongst us. Well, will we mend that which is amiss, and put in practice the rule that hath been given unto us? Let us then observe these rules.

First, hath our neighbour or brother some faults that are rather natural than punishable by the laws;

as, for example, is he somewhat proud, somewhat covetous, somewhat hasty and angry, somewhat superstitious? &c. Let us learn to skill of his nature, and bear with it. Secondly, such words and deeds as haply might have not the best construction, let us make the best of them. Thirdly, such faults as are secret, or committed by infirmity, let us not publish, but hide and cover them. Fourthly, if his fault be greater, and such as justly may offend us, let us go unto him, and tell him his fault between him and us alone, Mat. xviii. 15; if he hear us, we have won him; if he hear us not, then let us call unto us one or two, and utter our whole griefs before them, that by their means that which is amiss may be amended.

LECTURE LXXIX.

Let your patient mind be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.—PHILIP. IV. 5.

THESE words are, as we heard last day, another exhortation unto the Philippians, wherein the apostle exhorteth them not only to such a patience as is tried and seen in bearing injuries and putting up wrongs, but generally to such mildness in their behaviour, and moderation of their affections amongst their neighbours and brethren, as that for unity’s sake they will rather lose of their own, than strictly stand upon their right in matters of ordinary life; for so the word here used by the apostle signifieth, namely, a moderation of that by equity which in rigour might be exacted. Now, this their mildness and moderation among their brethren the apostle would have so conspicuous and evident, as that it might be known, and that to all men; not for matter of ostentation and vain-glory amongst men, but both that all men, as occasions were offered, might have trial thereof in them, and that amongst all men religion might thereby be increased, and the name of God glorified: ‘ Let your,’ &c. That which followeth, ‘ the Lord is at hand,’ is a reason of the exhortation, added by the apostle to prevent an objection; for the drift of the apostle’s exhortation unto them, aiming at this, that there should be such moderation in them as that they should not always stand upon their right, but sometimes yield of their right, and patiently put up the loss or the wrong, they might haply thus object and say, So should we make a hand indeed, and quickly be the meanest among men, and be trampled under feet as the clay in the streets. Therefore the apostle addeth, ‘ The Lord is at hand;’ as if he should have said, Though they do abuse your patient mildness and gentle moderation of your affections, yet do ye hold on a good course, in patience possess your souls, and let your patient mind be known to all men; for the Lord is at hand, even near to aid and help you, to avenge you of your wrongs, and to repay you with glory in the kingdom of glory.

The first thing which I noted in the exhortation was, that the apostle exhorteth the Philippians to a gentle moderation of their affections towards their brethren in matters of ordinary life, so that for the keeping of unity sometimes they yield of their right. Whence I observed a necessary rule for all Christians, to be kept for ever in all their dealings with their neighbours, which is, in matters of ordinary life to use such moderation of their affections, as that, for unity’s sake, they do not always strictly stand upon their right, but sometimes yield of their right, and sit them down with the loss, and patiently put up [with] the wrong. Two notable patterns I shewed you of the practice of this rule: the one in Abraham, Gen. xiii., who being Lot’s elder and uncle, and his better every way, stood not upon these points, but went unto him, and moved the peace between them, and yielded his own right to have it; the other in the king in the Gospel, Mat. xviii., who finding his servant poor, and not able to pay the debt he owed him, remitted his right, and forgave him his debt. Whose examples we ought to follow in matters of ordinary life and civil dealing one with another, not standing upon terms one with another, but yielding one unto another, shewing all meekness and mildness one towards another, and putting up some loss and some wrong one at another’s hands. But how quite contrary our practice is to this rule, and to these good patterns, I shewed you. For if we think that we have right, then we stand upon it, and thus we say with ourselves, Shall we yield of our right? so we may be begged* for fools indeed. Shall we sit down with the loss? Nay, we will have it if he have it out of his belly. Shall we put up such a wrong? Nay, then let them abuse us at their pleasures. We are as good as they, or we are their betters every way, or though we be meaner than they, yet shall they not think to have us under their girdles;

* Qu. ‘bagged’?—ED.

we may not, we cannot, we will not suffer these and these things. And herupon, to go now forward in the point, herupon, I say, it is that we are so unpeaceable one with another, and so uncharitable one towards another; herupon it is that there are such heart-burnings, grudgings, jars, debates, contentions, and divisions amongst us; we cannot be gentle, and courteous, and kind one unto another; we cannot yield one unto another, or bear one with another; we cannot put up any loss or wrong one at another's hands. The superior he despairs to yield in anything unto his inferior, and he thinks it is a disparagement unto him. The inferior he is loath to yield in anything unto his superior, and he thinks that if ye yield an inch the other will take an ell; if he yield in anything, the other will crow over him in all things. The equal, he cannot brook it to yield unto his equal, and he thinks it is a debasing and disgracing of himself to put up anything at his hands that is no better than himself. Thus in superior, inferior, and equal, is wanting that patient, gentle, courteous, and soft mind whereunto our apostle exhorteth; and instead of meekness, gentleness, patience, moderation, and mildness one towards another, are entertained murmurings, reasonings, heart-burnings, and unseemly speaking and dealing one against another. This is utterly a fault amongst us. Will we then mend that which is amiss, and put in practice the rule that hath been given us, using in matters of ordinary life such moderation of our affections amongst our neighbours and brethren as that for unity's sake we will pass by many faults and offences, and sometimes yield of our right, and sit us down with the loss, and put up the wrong? I am sure we should; and if we will do so, we must observe these rules that follow.

First, Hath our neighbour or brother some faults that are rather natural than punishable by the laws; as, for example, is he somewhat proud, somewhat covetous, somewhat hasty and angry, somewhat unsociable, somewhat suspicious? &c. We must in such cases deal with him as David did with his elder brother Eliab. When David, being sent of his father unto his brethren to the battle, had shewed his mislike that none would undertake to fight with Goliath, Eliab was very angry with David, and said, 1 Sam. xvii. 28, 'Why comest thou down bither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and malice of thine heart, that thou art come down to see the battle.' Now, what was David's reply unto these sharp speeches of his brother? He knew his brethren's stomach against him, and therefore only said, ver. 29, 'What have I now done? Is there not a cause?' and so departed. So we should learn to skill of the nature of them with whom we live, and we should bear much with such faults as these. To quit their pride with disdain if they be proud, to be ever telling them of their covetousness if they be covetous, to put fuel into the fire by ministering occa-

sions of anger if they be hasty and angry, to increase their jealousy by any preposterous dealing if they be somewhat suspicious, is no way for us to cure their faults, or to live with them in that Christian sort we should. This is that which behoveth us, if we will have our patient minds known, we must bear with these and such like faults in our neighbours and brethren, and spare oftentimes to speak or do that which their humour cannot brook.

The second rule which we must observe is this, such words and deeds as haply sometimes might have not the best construction or meaning, we must make the best of them; for if when things are said or done which might be well meant and well taken, they be worse taken than they are meant, and rather the worst than the best be made of them, shall we say of those men that they are patiently and gently minded? Nay, surely, this is rather an argument of an exasperate mind, which had rather blow the bellows than quench the fire, rather make a breach where there were none, than make up a breach where there were one. And therefore the apostle putteth such as 'take all things in the evil part,' Rom. i. 29, in the rank of them whom God had delivered up unto a reprobate mind. If, then, we will have our patient mind known, and be commended for that moderation which our apostle here requireth, we must not interpret such things as are said or done unto the worst, but when they may have a good meaning, we must make the best of them; for so indeed do we shew ourselves to have a good moderation in ourselves, if when things in themselves are either doubtful or not altogether the best, yet we make the best of them, and rather so construe them as they ought to be meant than as they might be taken.

A third rule which we must observe is this, such faults as are secret, or committed by infirmity, we must not divulgate and publish, but rather hide and cover them. It is the saying of our blessed Saviour, Mat. vii. 12, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do ye to them;' and it implieth this withal, that whatsoever we would not that men should do to us, we should not do to them. Now, then, who is it of us that if we fall through infirmity, if we run into any secret sin, would have it published in Gath or noised in the streets of Ashkelon? 'In many things we sin all,' James iii. 2; and he is best that offends the least. But who can brook him that whatsoever fault he hears in the house, by and by tells it on the housetops? or how shall he approve his moderation and his patient mind unto men, that whatsoever fault he knows of his neighbour or brother, disperseth it abroad, and makes it his common talk where he cometh? Nay, herein is our moderation and mildness seen and approved, if when we know any slip or fall of our neighbour, which haply many know not, we patiently pass by it, and so bear it that as much as in us lies we bury it out of the sight and

speech of men. For as Peter saith of love, 1 Peter iv. 8, that it ‘covereth the multitude of sins,’ so it is true in this moderation and patience whereof we speak, that it bears with and pardoneth many faults and offences of one man towards another, and likewise concealeth such faults and offences as secretly or through infirmity are committed against God. If, then, we will approve ourselves to have that patient mind which our apostle here requireth, we must not publish whatsoever fault of our neighbour we hear or know; but such faults as either are not commonly known abroad, or whereunto he hath fallen through infirmity, we must hide and cover them, and so bear with them as to bury them out of the sight and speech of men.

A fourth rule which we must observe is this: when the faults of our neighbour are such as that they may justly offend us, behovful it is that we go unto him, and tell him his fault between him and us alone; and if thus he hearken not unto us, then to call unto us one or two more, that his fault being here opened again, that which is amiss may be amended, and he, in the best sort that may be, may be reclaimed. Which rule is also the rule of our blessed Saviour touching private injuries and wrongs, where he saith, Mat. xvii. 15, ‘If thy brother trespass against thee,’ he speaketh of private trespasses and wrongs; for such as are public, and to the offence of the church, the apostle would have them rebuked openly, 1 Tim. v. 20; but if thy brother trespass against thee privately, giving thee cause of offence, ‘go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast won thy brother;’ and, as James speaketh, chap. v. 20, ‘hast saved a soul from death;’ and he repenting, thou art to forgive him, as Christ in another place warneth, Luke xvii. 3; ‘and if he will not vouchsafe to hear thee,’ to be sorry for his fault at thy private admonition, but rather increase his stomach and stubbornness against thee, ‘then take yet with thee one or two, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be confirmed.’ Otherwise, if, neglecting this rule of our Saviour, we shall upon such occasions traduce him, or break out into intemperate heats against him, how shall our patient mind be known unto men? For this is our patience and moderation, that when we have so just cause of offence, we deal as mildly and quietly with our neighbour as may be: first, privately conferring of things between ourselves, and then taking unto us one or two of our neighbours and friends which may hear, and help to order things that are out of order. And if we will approve ourselves to have that patient mind which here our apostle requireth, we must thus peaceably deal in matters wherein we have just cause of offence, and in no sort traduce our neighbours or brethren, or break out into impatient heats against them.

A fifth rule which we must observe, and the last which now I will note, is this, generally in matters of

this life we must remit of that which in rigour might be done; for if we shall thus stand upon it, that this we may do by right, and this the law will bear us out unto, what proof hereby shall we make of our moderation and patient mind? The law saith, Gen. ix. 6, ‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’ Now who will command the moderation of that judge that, so oft as blood is shed, pronounceth sentence of death, because in rigour of the words it may seem he may do that, which indeed in the equity of the law he may not? And so it fareth with us; if in matters of this or that quality betwixt us and our neighbours, we shall always do that which in extremity of right it seemeth that we may, and not moderate right by equity, who shall command our moderation? If we have the loss, we must sometimes sustain it; if we have the wrong, we must sometimes put it up, and for peace and unity’s sake we must remit and yield of our right, if we will have our moderation and patient mind to be known. More rules might be added unto these, but let these for this time suffice.

And now I beseech you to think on these things, and in your lives one with another to practise them, that so your moderate, and courteous, and soft, and gentle, and patient mind may be known. Bear one with another in such faults as are naturally in any of you, and spare sometimes to speak or do that which another’s humour cannot brook; make not always the worst of such words or deeds as haply might have not the best construction and meaning, but rather, when in themselves they are either doubtful, or not altogether the best, make the best of them, and so construe them as they may be well meant, rather than as they might be ill taken. Be not hasty to publish whatsoever fault of your neighbour you hear or know, but such faults as either are not commonly known abroad, or whereinto he hath fallen through infirmity, hide and cover them, and as much as in you is, bury them out of the sight and speech of men. Traduce not one another, nor break out into intemperate heats one against another, but in matters wherein ye may have just occasion of offence one against another, first privately expostulate your matters one with another; and if amends do not follow, debate your matters one with another, in the hearing of one or two of your neighbours and friends, which may hear and help to order your matters. Be not averse from sitting down sometimes with the loss, and from putting up sometimes the wrong; but for the maintenance of peace and concord one with another, remit and yield one unto another, that which in right sometimes ye might have one of another, that so your patient mind may be known unto all.

And why should I need in many words at this time to exhort you unto this moderation one towards another? May not this day, may not that holy table, sufficiently exhort you hereunto? For unless ye be patiently minded one towards another, can ye either

worthily celebrate those holy mysteries of Christ his blessed death and passion, or thankfully celebrate this day in remembrance of his resurrection? To celebrate these holy mysteries worthily, is not to come hither as to an ordinary table, and here to eat and drink; but to come hither prepared with all holy reverence, having examined ourselves before as touching our faith in Christ Jesus, whether by faith in Christ Jesus we feel a full assurance in our souls of the forgiveness of our sins, and of all other benefits of Christ his death and passion, which in this supper we desire for our further assurance to be sealed unto us; and touching our repentance, whether we be truly grieved in our souls for our sins against our God, and fully purpose hereafter to conform ourselves unto the will of God set down in his word; as touching, I say, our faith and reueitance, so touching our love, whether we love one another, so that, as members of the same body, we bear one with another, and help one another. For as faith and repentance towards God, so this love also towards our neighbour is so necessarily requisite, that otherwise we do not worthily celebrate these holy mysteries. And, therefore, if we will be worthy partakers of this holy supper, as here 'we that are many do all eat one bread, and drink of one cup,' and are all confirmed in one faith, and nourished to grow up into one body, whereof Christ is the head, so must we love one another, and as members of the same body, bear one with another, and help one another. So that at this time the very celebration of these holy mysteries, may sufficiently put us in mind of that moderation and patient mind which ought to be in one of us towards another. Neither that only, but this day also, wherein we celebrate the remembrance of Christ his blessed resurrection, may sufficiently put us in mind hereof. For hath Christ loosed the bands of death, and by his resurrection from the dead, triumphed over death, and mightily declared himself to be the Son of God? Yes, he hath, and this day we celebrate the most joyful remembrance thereof. And how should not this put us in mind of rising from the death of sin unto the life of God? Or how shall we think that we are risen unto the life of God, if there be not this moderation and patient mind in us one towards another? Since, then, by the resurrection of Christ as this day, we are put in mind of our resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of God, thereby also we are put in mind of that moderation and patient mind which ought to be in one towards another. Let therefore the celebration of those holy mysteries of Christ his death and passion, let the memorial of his blessed resurrection, as on this day, be sufficient to stir you up unto this moderation which our apostle here requireth, and whereof hitherto we have spoken. And whosoever findeth himself to have failed herein heretofore, let him give all diligence hereafter, that his patient mind may be known unto all men.

The second thing which I note in this exhortation, is this, that the apostle would have this their moderation and mildness so conspicuous and evident, as that it might be known, and that to all men; no doubt to this end, that all men, as occasions were offered, might have trial of their moderation and mildness, and that thereby religion among all men might be increased, and the name of God, in whom they believed, glorified. Whenee I observe the extent of the moderation and mildness that ought to be in us, how far the practise thereof is to reach, that they may have trial and experience thereof; namely, not to them alone that use us kindly and gently, or to them alone which are within, but to them also which are without, even unto all men is our patient mind to be made known. For as our Saviour saith in somewhat another matter, Mat. v. 46, 47, 'If ye love them which love you, what reward shall ye have? And if ye be friendly to your brethren only, what singular thing do ye?' So may it well be said in this matter, if our patient mind be only known unto them that use us with all mildness and gentleness, what singular thing do we? And if we moderate our affections, and yield only unto them that yield unto us, what praise shall we have? Our moderation, then, and patient mind, is not to be restrained, in the use thereof, unto these and these men, but it is to be shewn unto all men, with whom we live, be they better or worse. So the apostle, speaking of charitable beneficence, 'Let us do good,' saith he, Gal. vi. 10, 'while we have time, unto all men.' And again, Rom. xii. 18, 'Have peace with all men.' And generally the precept is, that we have our conversation honest among all men. As lights therefore (for so we are called), we must communicate the light that is in us unto all men, holding forth our lights of gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperancy, moderation, patience, &c., unto all men; imitating therein our Father which is in heaven, Mat. v. 45, who 'maketh his sun to arise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.' And now, why are we to use this moderation towards all men, that our patient mind may be known unto all men? The reason is, that all men seeing our moderation and mildness towards all men, may think the better of the religion which we profess, and the rather glorify the Lord of glory, in whom we believe. For if they shall see untowardliness and unkindness in one of us towards another, quickly do they speak evil of the name of God, and of the doctrine which we teach. And therefore the apostle always exhorts all sorts unto all holy duties; and why? 'that the name of God and his doctrine be not evil spoken of,' 1 Tim. vi. 1; 'that the word of God be not evil spoken of,' Titus ii. 5; that 'the worthy name, after which they be named, be not blasphemed,' James ii. 7. But if they shall see moderation and mildness, meekness, gentleness, and patience in one of us towards another, we cannot better draw men unto the glory of our God, and to a good

opinion of our religion, and of the truth which we profess. And in this respect it is that our blessed Saviour thus exhorteth all men, saying, Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ And in the same respect also it is, that the apostle Peter exhorteth, saying, 1 Peter ii. 12, ‘Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you as of evil doers, may by your good works which they shall see, glorify God in the day of the visitation.’ For an ornament then of the truth which we profess, and for the glory of our God in whom we believe, our patient mind is to be made known unto all men, not to our brethren only, or such as use us kindly, but even to all men.

Here then, first, were to be reproved those brawls and quarrels which fall out amongst neighbours and brethren about matters of twopence, matters of nothing. Our apostle would have our moderation and patient mind known unto all men. How is it, then, that neighbours and brethren will not one yield unto another, will not one bear with another? One will have his right, and not yield a jot; another will avenge his wrong, or else he will die for it; a thirl will bear coals at no man’s hands, but such as he brews, such shall he drink; and this amongst neighbours and brethren. And how shall it be thought, that we will use moderation towards all men, while such is our behaviour towards our neighbours and brethren? Whilst it is thus among ourselves, we shew plainly how little heed we have taken unto this exhortation of the Holy Ghost, and consequently how little care we take, that the name of God, and the truth which we profess, be not evil spoken of.

Secondly, Here were to be reproved such carnal exceptions as are commonly taken against this exhortation. The Holy Ghost saith, ‘Let your patient mind be known unto all men.’ Unto all men? say we; this is an hard saying. Unto such as use us kindly and courteously, great reason that our patient mind should be known; but unto them that be ever ready to thwart and cross us, to wrong and grieve us, to taunt and mock us, to revile and speak evil of us, what reason

that our patient mind should be known? Thus will we rather teach the Holy Ghost what to speak, than we will be taught by the Holy Ghost what to do; but such exceptions we must take heed of. If we will suffer ourselves to be taught by the Holy Ghost, and as our apostle willeth, we must let our patient mind be known unto all men without such exception of any.

Thirdly, Hence we learn what we are to respect in the practice of every Christian virtue, namely, the glory of God, and the propagation of his truth. For as our Saviour saith of alms, prayer, fasting, and the like, Mat. vi., that if they be done for the praise of men, then they have their praise, but not with God, so may it be said of the practice of every Christian virtue, that if therein we respect the praise of men, we have our praise, but not with God. The thing that we must aim at in the practice of gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperancy, moderation, patience, and other works of the Spirit in us, is the glory of God, that men seeing these fruits of the Spirit in us, they may be brought unto the same obedience and service of one God with us. And thus it shall come to pass, that they who haply have said in their hearts, there is no God, that they who cannot yet grow to the liking of the same truth with us, shall say of us, Surely God is in you indeed, surely this is the way of truth wherein ye do walk.

Let us therefore hearken unto the exhortation of our apostle, and as he exhorteth, let our patient mind be known unto all men. Let us not bangle and wrangle one with another for every light matter, but let us bear one with another, and yield one unto another. Let us not, after the fancy of our own reason, abridge that which the Holy Ghost enlargeth, but let our moderation be known to all, without exception of any. And let us, in the practice both of this and of every Christian virtue, aim at the glory of God, and the furtherance of his holy truth which we profess. And as this day we profess, by our meeting at this holy table, sound love and charity with all men, so at all times let our moderation and patient mind be known unto all men.

LECTURE LXXX.

The Lord is at hand.—PHILIP. IV. 5.

THESE words have been already noted to consist of an exhortation, and a reason of the exhortation: the exhortation this, ‘Let your patient mind, &c.; the reason this, ‘The Lord is at hand.’ In the exhortation were noted, first, the thing whereunto the apostle exhorted the Philippians; secondly, the large scope wherein the thing is to run. The thing whereunto the apostle exhorted the Philippians is mildness in their behaviour, and moderation of their affections

towards their neighbours and brethren, so that for unity’s sake they would rather lose their own than strictly stand upon their right in matters of ordinary life. The large field wherein he would have this their mildness and moderation to run reacheth unto all men, ‘Let your patient mind be known to all,’ &c.

The Lord is at hand. This reason, as I told you, is added to prevent an objection. For the apostle, having exhorted the Philippians to such a mildnes-

and moderation, as that they should not always strictly stand upon their right, but sometimes yield of their right, and patiently put up the loss and the wrong, the Philippians might haply thus object and say that so indeed their case should be most miserable, and they should be trampled under feet as clay in the streets. Therefore the apostle addeth, 'The Lord is at hand ;' as if he should have said, Though they abuse your patient mildness and gentle moderation of your affections, yet do ye hold on a good course, in patience possess your souls, and let your patient mind be known unto all men, for the Lord is at hand ; otherwise, indeed, your ease were hard, if the Lord were far from you, and looked not at you, nor regarded you to help you in every time of need, and to relieve you in every your wrongs. But the Lord is at hand. Now we must understand that the Lord is said to be at hand, after divers sorts, in the holy Scriptures. For sometimes he is said to be near, or at hand, in respect of himself, of the presence of his deity and glorious majesty ; as where the apostle saith, Acts xvii. 27, that 'he is not far from every one of us ; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.' Thus himself saith, Jer. xxiii. 24, that he 'filleth heaven and earth,' and therefore is thus near unto whatsoever is in heaven or earth. Thus the prophet saith, Ps. cxxxix. 7-10, that he cannot convey himself out of his presence. For 'if he climb up into heaven, there he is ; if he go down into hell, there he is ; if he take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, there also doth his hand lead him ; if he say the darkness shall cover him, even the night shall be light about him.' And thus he is near even unto all the world, unto his enemies, sitting in the midst of them, seeing their devices, and laughing them to scorn ; unto all that have life or being, communicating that unto them which alone is properly in himself, who is life, John xiv. 6, and whose name is I AM, Exod. iii. 14. Again, the Lord is said to be near, or at hand, in respect of his grace, and providence, and powerful working of his Holy Spirit ; as where the prophet saith, Ps. cxlv. 18, 'The Lord is near unto all that call upon him, yea, to all that call upon him in truth ;' he is near unto them to hear them, and to help them. And thus is he peculiarly said to be near unto his children : not that he offereth not this special grace of coming near unto them unto the wicked, for thus he saith unto them by his prophet, Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord whiles he may be found, call ye upon him whiles he is near ;' that is, whiles he offereth himself and his grace unto you, if ye will receive it. Nay, more than so, sometimes he is so near unto the wicked that he lightens them with his Holy Spirit, gives them 'a taste of the heavenly gift, of the good word of good, and of the powers of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 4, 5. But yet, because the wicked, some of them, refuse this grace when it is offered, and some of them fall away from it when

they have had a taste of it, therefore is he peculiarly said to be near unto his children by his grace, and might, and providence, and powerful working of his Holy Spirit.

Again, the Lord is said sometimes to be near at hand, in respect of his last coming unto judgment, when he shall come in bodily presence in the clouds of heaven, to judge both the quick and the dead ; as where James saith, chap. v. 8, 'Be patient, and settle your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near ;' and likewise, where the apostle saith, Heb. x. 37, 'He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' In the first sense, the Lord is at hand as well to the wicked as the godly, to give, as well to the one as to the other, life and being, and other good graces of his Spirit. In the second sense, the Lord is at hand by his providence peculiarly to the godly, to save and defend them, and to give the Spirit of sanctification unto them. In the third sense also, the Lord is at hand, both to the wicked and to the godly, to render vengeance in flaming fire unto the wicked, and to crown the godly with a crown of glory and immortality in the heavens. In the first sense, I take it, it is not here said that the Lord is at hand, because that could be no such special reason to move the Philippians unto mildness and patience towards all men, having no more comfort in it for the godly than for the wicked. But whether it be meant in the second or third sense, that the Lord is at hand, the reason holdeth strongly that they should in patience and mildness possess their souls, though haply their patience and mildness be much abused. For be it that the reason why their patient mind should be known unto all men, though their patience be much abused, be either this, because the Lord is at hand to hear and help them when they are oppressed, to save and defend them when they are wronged, or this, because the Lord is at hand to give unto them a crown that have borne the cross, and to avenge them utterly of their enemies ; either of the reasons might be sufficient motives to persuade them to let their patient mind be known unto all men. And whether of them to choose the rather, as more agreeable to the apostle's mind, I cannot peremptorily affirm. Either of them may very well stand with the meaning of the apostle in this place. And therefore we will see what profitable notes we may gather from either of them, whereof we may make some use for ourselves.

First, then, admitting this to be the meaning of the apostle in this place, the Lord is at hand by his watchful providence over you, to hear and help you, to save and defend you, I note that the apostle's reason to move the Philippians unto a patient mildness and gentle moderation towards all men, yea, though their patience and mildness were much abused, is because the Lord is at hand, by his watchful providence over them, to hear and help them, to save and defend them when they are abused, oppressed, or

afflicted. Whence I observe a special motive, which may and ought to persuade us to possess our souls in patience whosoever we are abused, oppressed, or afflicted, namely, the certain persuasion hereof, that the Lord his providence always watcheth over us, to behold our sufferings and our wrongs, to hear us when we call upon him in truth, to rid and save us from the wrongful dealings of men, and to deliver us in every needful time of trouble. If we be the Lord his inheritance, we must look for it, to have many trials of our patience and moderation by many sufferings and wrongs. Jacob shall have his uncle Laban to deceive him, Gen. xxxi., to change his wages ten times, to persecute him, and if the Lord forbid him not, to kill him. Joseph shall have his own brethren to hate him, Gen. xxxvii., to conspire against him, to slay him, and if the Lord keep them from killing him, to sell him into a strange land to be a bond-servant. The children of Israel shall have a Pharaoh to weary them of their lives, Exod. i., by sore labour in clay and brick, and in all work in the field, with all manner of cruel bondage, to command to kill all their male children, and by all cruel oppression to labour to make havock of them. Daniel's companions shall have some Chaldeans to devise mischief against them, Dan. iii., to accuse them to the king, and to get them thrown into the hot fiery furnace. Daniel himself shall drink of the like cup, chap. vi. And generally, the disciples of Christ, which we are if we continue in his word, shall in the world have affliction to try their faith and their patience, John viii. 31, xvi. 33. The gold shall go through the fire ere it be purified, and the wheat, ere it be made fine manchet for the Lord his own mouth, shall be beaten with the flail, ground in the mill, sifted, and have all the bran bolted out of it. This is the gate of the Lord, and the righteous shall enter into it; and this is the lot of God's inheritance, to pass through the wilderness, and through the Red Sea, to the promised land of Canaan. And in all this, what is the child of God to do? Even as our Saviour wills him, Luke xxi. 19, 'by his patience he is to possess his soul;' and as our apostle here exhorteth, to make his patient mind to be known unto all men.

Oh, but in such causes of impatience, how should a man be patient? When open foes malign him, feigned friends abuse him, and troubles hedge him in on every side; when no man bears with him, no man yields to him; but, the more he yields and bears with others, the more he is abused and wronged by others; what should persuade him to moderation and mildness, to gentleness and patience? Do we ask what? Do we know that the Lord his providence watcheth over us alway? Do we know that he will not leave us nor forsake us, nor deliver us into the will of our enemies? Do we know that all the hairs of our head are numbered, and that not one of them shall fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's will? Here,

then, is, or should be, enough to persuade us to be patient and moderate whosoever we are abused, afflicted, or oppressed, 'the Lord is at hand.' The Lord, the Lord, strong, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, reserving mercy for thousands, and not making the wicked innocent, the most mighty God, unto whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, who sitteth in heaven, and beholdeth the earth, and seeth whatsoever is done among the sons of men; our Lord by right of creation, in that he made us of nothing when we were not; our Lord in the right of redemption, in that when we were bond-slaves under hell, death, and damnation, he paid the ransom of our redemption, and freed us from the bondage of sin and Satan; and our Lord in the right of sovereignty, to rule and govern us by his Spirit, to save and defend us under his wings: he is at hand, near about our paths and about our beds, pitcheth his tents round about us, and giveth his angels charge over us; he is at hand, near to behold our sufferings and our wrongs, as himself saith, Exod. iii. 9, 'I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, wherewith the Egyptians oppress them; near to hear us when we call upon him, as himself saith, Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me; near to deliver us from the wrongful dealings of men, and therefore the prophet prayeth unto him, 'Oh deliver me from the wrongful dealings of men, and give me not over unto mine oppressors; near to save us under his feathers in every needful time of trouble, for so the psalmist saith, Ps. ix. 9, 'The Lord will be a defence for the oppressed, even a refuge in due time of trouble.' Hereof Jacob had experience when Laban persecuted him, in that the Lord curbed Laban, when he said unto him, Gen. xxxi. 24, 'Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob aught save good.' Hereof Joseph had experience in his danger by his brethren, in that the Lord, first by Reuben, saved him that he was not slain; and after that he was sold, made him ruler of Pharaoh's house, and of all his substance, Gen. xxxvii. 41. Hereof the children of Israel had experience when Pharaoh oppressed them, in that the Lord, Exod. iii., when their cry for their bondage came up unto him, delivered them out of the house of bondage by the hands of Moses and Aaron. Hereof Daniel and his companions had experience when they were traduced unto the king, in that the Lord shut the mouths of the lions, that they hurt not the one, Dan. vi. 22, and abated the heat of the fire that it had no power over the bodies of the other, chap. iii. 27. Hereof the disciples of Christ had experience when they were cast into prison, in that the Lord sent his angel unto them, and delivered them out of prison, Acts v. 19. And hereof the children of God have continual experience, in that the Lord helps them to right when they suffer wrong, feedeth them when they are hungry, looseth them when they are in prison,

giveth them sight when they are blind, raiseth them when they are fallen, keepeth them if they be strangers, relieveth them if they be fatherless or widows, and maketh all their beds in their sickness. And hereupon David resolved and said, Ps. iii. 6, 'I will not be afraid though ten thousands of people beset me round about ;' nay, Ps. xxvii. 3, 'though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not mine heart be afraid ;' nay, Ps. xxiii. 4, 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' And why ? 'For thou art with me,' saith the prophet ; then, O Lord, art with me, and therefore, whosoever be against me, in what danger soever I be, I will fear no evil. This, then, to know that, the Lord is with us, and that he is always near at hand to hear us and to help us, should quiet us, as of all fear, so of all perturbations of the mind, so that we should patiently brook whatsoever might otherwise stir us unto impatience.

How is it, then, that upon every occasion we are so unpatient, and have so little hold of ourselves ? If any man thwart or cross us, if any man harm or wrong us, if any man taunt or mock us, if any man revile or speak evil of us, if any man offer us any hard measure in word or in deed, how do we bite upon the bridle and stomach the matter ! One abuse must be quit with another, one wrong with another, one mischief with another, or else we think we have never played the men. But if we be falsely accused before the judge, of theft, murder, sedition, treason, or the like ; if we be wrongfully scourged, imprisoned, racked, or tormented ; if we be cruelly or deceitfully turned out of house and home, lands and living, and all that we have : oh how, then, are our souls disquieted within us, and how do our hearts burn within us till we be avenged of such as have thus dealt with us ! Here must revenge be sought by blood, death, and if there be any further revenge than this.

And tell me, I pray, what is the cause of such impatience in these and the like cases, yea, oftentimes, when the Lord his hand is upon us in poverty, sickness, and the like. Is it not even hence, because either we know not, or remember not, that the Lord is at hand ? Yes, verily, it is the ignorance, or forgetfulness of the Lord, and of his provident watchfulness over us, that makes us fret and fume, and, like the dog, run upon the bone that is cast at us. We know not, or we remember not, that vengeance is the Lord's, and that he hath promised that he will repay and reward the wicked after their deserving ; and therefore, forsooth, when we think there is cause, we will be disquieted, we will kill and slay, and we will be avenged. For if we knew or remembered that vengeance is the Lord's, and that he will repay, we would patiently pass by the contumelies and wrongs of men, and leave them to the Lord that judgeth righteous judgment. We know not, or we remember not, that the Lord is near unto all that call upon him in

truth, to hear and help us in all dangers, if we patiently wait upon him, that we may be safe under his feathers ; and, therefore, forsooth, when troubles assault us, or the sorrows of death compass us about, we think we do well to be as unpatient, as Jonas was angry for his gourd. For if we knew, or remembered, that he is at hand at every needful time of trouble to help us, our souls would patiently wait upon the Lord until he should help us. Either we think not of the Lord, and of his watchful providence over us, to save and defend us, and to avenge our sufferings and wrongs ; or, carnally we say, if the Lord be at hand, I wish I might know it, I wish I might hear him, I wish I might see him, as if, otherwise, we could not discern of his being near unto us ; or, if we be better taught, yet we think him not near if he do not always hear and help when we wish and call. And therefore every small thing, and least trifle almost, moves us, and disquiets us, and puts us out of all patience.

Whatsoever, therefore, contumelies or disgraces are offered unto us, whatsoever losses or wrongs we sustain, whatsoever troubles or temptations do assault us, whatsoever malice or wickedness be practised against us, let us know that the Lord his providence watcheth over us, to save and defend us, to take our matter into his own hand, and to be avenged of our enemies. And, therefore, let us not be discouraged or disquieted, let us not fret or fume, or busy our heads with thinking of revenge, but let us in our patience possess our souls, and let our patient mind be known to all men. If we cannot, by our moderation and mildness, by our gentleness and patience, win them unto us, that in word or deed wrong us, but that they, like unto wicked Julians, the more abuse us and wrong us, yet the Lord is at hand, to behold our sufferings and to take our matter into his own hand. To bridle, then, our impatience, let us think with ourselves, Are we evil entreated through tyrants ? Doth our own familiar friend lie in wait against us ? Do some imagine mischief for us, others whet their tongues against us, and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words, and do others practise what they can against us ? Well, the Lord is at hand ; he seeth and knoweth all things, he delivereth us, and avengeth us of all that rise up against us, when and as it seems good unto him. He that keepeth us slumbereth not, nor sleepeth ; and therefore in our patience will we possess our souls, reposing ourselves under the covert of his wings. Thus if we shall lift up our eyes unto the Lord, and persuade ourselves of his being always near at hand unto us, by his watchful providence over us, we shall not only not be troubled with these sharp fits of this hot ague of impatience upon every accident or cross, but as men truly humbled in ourselves, mortified unto the world, and looking only unto the Lord, we shall in all mildness and moderation make our patient mind known unto all men. And let this be spoken of this observation from this meaning of these words.

Secondly, Admitting this to be the meaning of the apostle in this place, that the Lord is at hand by his second coming in the flesh unto judgment, to requite our hard measures into their bosoms that have ill meted unto us, and to wipe all tears from our eyes, and give us rest with himself, I note that the apostle's reason to move the Philippians unto a patient mildness and gentle moderation towards all men, is because the Lord is at hand to break the clouds and to come unto judgment, to wipe all tears from their eyes, and to recompense tribulation to all that have troubled them. And hence I observe another special motive which may and ought to persuade us to possess our souls in patience whensoever we are abused, oppressed, or afflicted; namely, the approaching of Christ his second coming unto judgment, when he shall recompense tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us which are troubled rest with him. This motive also unto patience the apostle James useth, where he saith, chap. v. 7, 8, 'be ye patient unto the coming of the Lord: Be ye patient and settle your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth near.' And certainly if we could and would remember this, that the coming of the Lord draweth near, we would be less provoked upon every occasion unto intemperate heats; and whatsoever might haply seem enough to disquiet us, we would pass it over with greater patience; for thus we should say with ourselves, Hath God given all judgment unto his Son, and is he ready to come unto judgment? Is the time at hand when he shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God? when he shall shew himself in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them that know not God, nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvellous in all them that believe? Shall I then, when I am abused or wronged, be grieved and disquieted, or seek to be avenged? Nay, the time is at hand when all wrongs shall be redressed by him

that judgeth righteously: in the mean time I will bear with patience what man doth or saith against me. Thus by remembrance of the approaching of Christ his second coming unto judgment, should our patient mind be known unto all men.

Oh but, will foolish man say, this hath been said these fifteen hundred years, that the Lord is at hand, and that his coming draweth near, and yet all things continue alike; how should this, then, still be a motive unto patience? When this second coming shall be, I cannot say. It is a thing 'which the Father hath kept in his own power,' Acts i. 7, and so peculiarly reserved unto himself, as that 'of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but God only,' Mat. xxiv. 36; nay, not Christ Jesus himself, as he is man, knoweth it. And, therefore, they who labour in that point to design that time, are therein more curions than wise. But hath it been said these fifteen hundred years that the Lord is at hand, and that his coming draweth near? And did the Holy Ghost, who cannot lie, say *then* that it was near, and is it [not] *now* very near, even at our doors? 'The Lord is patient toward us, and would have no man to perish, but would all men to come to repentance,' 2 Pet. iii. 9, and therefore hath hitherto deferred his coming. But 'yet a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37. If fifteen hundred years be past, the rest of the time appointed must needs be shorter, and so the day and hour approach nearer; and what one sign foretold to go before his second coming, is not already past, except it be that one of the calling of the Jews? Let the exhortation, then, of the apostle prevail with us, that our patient mind be known to all men. Let us be meek and gentle, kind and courteous one to another, yielding one unto another, and bearing one with another; for the Lord is at hand, his coming draweth near, when he shall give us rest with him, and avenge all our wrongs.

LECTURE LXXXI.

Be nothing careful: but in all things let your requests be shewed unto God in prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks.—PHILIP. IV. 6.

WE have heard divers exhortations of the apostle unto the Philippians. His last exhortation unto them in the former verse was, that their moderate, and gentle, and patient mind might be known unto all men. The reason, because the Lord is at hand, not only according to the presence of his deity and glorious majesty, which filleth heaven and earth, but at hand by his continual watchful providence over them to hear and help them, to save and defend them, and at hand by his second coming 'in the flesh unto judgment, to wipe all tears from their

eyes, and to recompense tribulation to all that trouble them.'

Be nothing careful. In these words we have another exhortation unto the Philippians, wherein the apostle dissuadeth one thing, persuadeth another thing, and noteth the consequence or effect which will follow upon both. The thing which he dissuadeth is, too great carefulness for the things of this life, and for the event of such things as commonly we take in hand, and have to deal withal, in these words, 'Be nothing careful;' where the word used by the apostle

signifieth oftentimes a diffident carefulness, such as distracteth the mind sundry ways, and almost eateth up a man; such as is the covetous man's carefulness, whose mind runneth so still upon his matters, as that not daring either to depend upon God, or the faithfulness of any man, for the event of them, his turmoiled thoughts are always busied about them. Which carefulness being an evil carefulness, the apostle dissuadeth it, saying, 'Be nothing careful;' that is, let it be far from you to be troubled with such worldly and distrustful carefulness for anything in this life, or for the event of anything that you have to deal withal.

The thing which he persuadeth is, in all things to fly unto God by prayer, as depending wholly upon him, and committing all their ways unto him; so that as he would not have them too careful about anything, so he would not have them careless in anything, but in all things to fly unto God, pouring out such prayers unto him as may be accepted with him. Where first note the antithesis in that the apostle saith, 'Be careful for *nothing*, but in *all things*', &c. Secondly, note the distribution of prayer into his divers kinds, 'Let your *requests*,' or suits, or petitions, there is the general, 'be shewed unto God in *prayer*, and *supplication*, with *giving of thanks*.' prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, these be the kinds or particulars comprehended under the general. By *requests*, therefore, is meant generally whatsoever prayer is made unto God for the obtaining of that which is good, or avoiding of that which is evil. By *prayer* is meant such prayer as we pour out unto God for blessings corporal or spiritual, temporal or eternal. By *supplication* is meant such prayer as we make unto God for preserving us from evils, corporal or spiritual, temporal or eternal. By *giving of thanks* is meant a thankful praising of God for benefits bestowed upon us, or for our deliverance from evils; and all these are commonly in all the prayers of the faithful, as wherein both they give thanks unto God for blessings received, and preservation from evils, and also pray unto God for the things which are good, and to be delivered from the things which are evil. Thirdly, note this that the apostle saith, 'Let your requests be shewed unto God,' or be made known unto God; not as if their requests or anything else were not known unto God; but the meaning is, either that their requests should be known by an approving knowledge unto God, so that they should be accepted with him, or that their requests should be known, not unto men, as their patient mind was to be known, but unto God. The thing, then, which he persuadeth in effect is this, in all things whatsoever to depend upon God, and to fly unto him by prayer, both pouring out acceptable prayers unto him for obtaining of good things and deliverance from evil things, and giving him thanks for blessings in good things and deliverance from evil. The consequence or effect which will follow upon both, the thing

dissuaded and the thing persuaded, the apostle noteth in the next verse, 'And the peace,' &c.; so that these words divide themselves into these three branches: first, a dehortation from a thing which is evil, in these words, 'Be nothing careful'; secondly, an exhortation unto a thing which is good, in these words, 'but in all things,' &c.; thirdly, a consequent or effect which will follow upon flying the evil and following the good, in these words, 'And the peace,' &c. Now let us see what we may gather hence for our use.

The first thing which I note is, the apostle's dehortation, wherein he dissuadeth the Philippians from all worldly and distrustful carefulness for anything in this life, or the event of anything that they have to deal withal. Whence I observe a fault which we are by all means to take heed of and to fly, namely, too, too great carefulness for the things of this life. We may not in any wise so trouble ourselves with turmoiling thoughts and cares for the things of this life, or the event of anything we have to deal withal, as if we durst not depend upon God, or the faithfulness of any man, unless our own cares also were continually employed about them. Carefulness and diligence in all our labours is requisite and necessary, but worldly and distrustful carefulness for anything is wretched and ungodly. For the better conceiving, therefore, of this note, we are to understand that there are three sorts of carefulness: one, godly and necessarily; another, worldly and wicked; and a third mixed of both, neither simply godly, nor simply wicked, but mixed of both. A godly carefulness it is, when we give all diligence to do the works of our callings with all faithfulness, doing that which we should, and commanding the event unto God. And so far is it off, that this should be disliked or forbidden here or elsewhere, that it is everywhere commanded, and by example in the godly commanded unto us. 'He that ruleth,' saith the apostle, Rom. xii. 8, 'let him do it with diligence'; and again, Eph. iv. 3, 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherunto ye are called, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' And to this purpose is that of the apostle, where he saith, 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If there be any that provideth not for his own, and namely for them of his household, he denieth the faith, and is worse than an infidel; and that, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed'; and as in these and many other like places, this carefulness is commanded, so is it oft commanded unto us in the example of the godly. The apostle witnesseth this carefulness to have been in himself, where he saith, that he had the care of all the churches, 2 Cor. xi. 28; that he had great fighting, or, as some translate, great care for the Colossians, chap. ii. 1; that he spake the gospel of God unto the Thessalonians with much striving, or care, as some translate, 1 Thess. ii. 2; and the same apostle commendeth this carefulness in Timothy towards the Philippians, who faithfully cared for their

matters, Philip. ii. 20 ; in Epaphras towards the Colossians, who in his prayers was always careful for them, chap. iv. 12 ; and in the Corinthians, in whom their godly sorrow had wrought great care, 2 Cor. vii. 11. And generally, this care is so necessarily requisite in the prince for his people, in the pastor for his flock, in the householder for his household, and in every man for himself, that either he must be thus careful, faithfully to do the duties of his calling, whatsoever it be, and to leave the success of his labours whatsoever unto the Lord, or else he cannot be godly.

Another carefulness there is, neither simply good, nor simply evil, but mixed of both, namely when we are careful to do the duties of our calling, and withhold trouble ourselves too much about the event of things, which we should leave wholly to the Lord. And this carefulness is good, so far as it makes us careful to do the duties of our calling. But in that hereby we trouble ourselves too much about the event of our labours and success of our business, it is evil ; for this is to be left unto the Lord, according to that of the prophet, Ps. xxxvii. 5, ‘ Commit thy way unto the Lord, and trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.’ We are to do that we ought by the duty of our place and calling, and the Lord he must give the increase, the blessing and the event, and we must pray and wait for it from him. Otherwise, howsoever our carefulness be about that we ought, yet is it evil, because it is more employed thereabout than it ought.

A third carefulness there is, which is worldly, and ariseth of distrust in God, which is when men are too, too much careful of the things of this life, and of the event of the things they have to deal withal, as that the thought thereof troubleth them day and night, causeth their sleep to depart from their eyes, and even eateth them up alive. This is the carefulness which the apostle here forbiddeth, not the first, nor the second, but so much as it is linked in with this last about the event of things. So that, as I said before, we may not in any wise so trouble ourselves with troubling thoughts and cares for the things of this life, or the event of anything we have to deal withal, as if we durst not depend upon God, or the faithfulness of any man, unless our own cares also be continually employed about them. This also our blessed Lord forbiddeth, Mat. vi. 25, where he saith, ‘ Be not careful for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.’ And the apostle Peter likewise, 1 Pet. v. 7, where he saith, ‘ Cast all your care on him ;’ and the prophet also, Ps. lv. 22, where he saith, ‘ Cast thy burden, or thy care, upon the Lord, and he shall nourish thee ;’ as if the prophet and the apostle should have said, Be ye nothing careful, but if there be anything that troubles you, anything which may cause you to care, cast it off yourself, and cast it upon the Lord ; which carefulness, if it were only thus forbidden by the Holy

Ghost, it should be sufficient either for the not entertaining, or for the dislodging of such a guest being entertained. But besides that it is forbidden, there are many other reasons, why this over much carefulness should utterly be abandoned from among the sons of God. For, first, whence ariseth this evil among the sons of men, of over-much carking and caring for the things of this life ? Is it not from our ignorance or distrust of God’s providence and care over us ? Yes, surely, either we know not that he can and will, or else we doubt whether he can and will, provide for us and ours when age, or poverty, or sickness, or famine, or imprisonment, or banishment, or the like shall befall us ; and therefore we scratch and scrape together all that ever we can, lest when either some of those things shall surprise us, or the charge of family and children shall grow upon us, we should perish in the needful time of trouble ; and hereupon it is that our blessed Saviour sets us unto the fowls of the heaven, that by them we may be taught in the providence and care of God over us : Mat. vi. 26, ‘ Behold,’ saith he, ‘ the fowls of the heaven, for they sow not, neither reap, nor carry into the barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they ?’ as if he should have said, God’s providence and care watcheth over the fowls of the heaven to feed them, which are far meaner and baser creatures than yourselves ; how should ye, then, seeing this, either not know, or doubt of God’s providence and care over you ? They sow not, nor reap, nor carry into the barns, and yet God feedeth them ; how should ye then, seeing this, when ye have ploughed and sown, commit the rest unto the Lord, and without farther carking or caring, to trust surely that he will feed you ! Thus we see how our blessed Saviour, to beat down our immoderate carefulness, instructeth us in God’s providence over us, and thereby sheweth plainly that the root whence this unmeasurable* carefulness springeth, is ignorance or distrust in God’s providence over us. Secondly, to what use or profit is our over much carking and caring for the things of this life ? Is it not in vain, and to no use at all ? The prophet tells us so, Ps. cxxvii. 2, where he saith, ‘ It is in vain for you to rise up early, and to lie down late, and to eat the bread of carefulness ;’ as if he should have said, Early rising to work and labour, going late to bed from work, all the care that we can take is in vain and to no purpose, except the Lord give a blessing unto it. To which purpose also is that of our blessed Saviour, Mat. vi. 27, where he saith, ‘ Which of you, by taking care, is able to add one cubit unto his stature ?’ as if he should have said, As it is in vain for him that is of a low stature to trouble his thoughts about the adding of anything unto his stature, because when he bath taken as much care that way as he can, yet he cannot add one cubit, or one hand-breadth, or one inch unto his stature, so is it in vain for any

* That is ‘disproportionate.’—ED.

man to vex himself and trouble his thoughts about the gathering of riches, or the event of his labours, because when he hath taken as much care as he can, yet not by his care are his riches increased, but by the Lord his blessing, who maketh poor and maketh rich, 1 Sam. ii. 7; nor by his care doth his corn grow, his ships return from far countries, or his labours prosper in anything, but by the Lord only, who giveth increase, and a blessing unto everything at his pleasure; and albeit it may be, that some covetous misers and wretches of the world, may, by fraud and guile, or how else soever, scrape and scratch more riches together than they should, yet riches so gotten are rather the beginning of poverty than of riches. For as the preacher saith, Eccles. v. 13, 'Riches,' so gotten, 'are reserved,' and heaped up 'to the owners thereof for their evil'; for either they are as a fretting canker unto the rest, to bring the owners thereof unto poverty, or else they are gathered for him that will scatter them, so that to be over-much careful, is altogether in vain and unprofitable. And thirdly, as it is vain and unprofitable, so is it also pernicious and hurtful. For whiles our thoughts are running up and down upon this or that matter, whiles we are troubled with cares here or there, while the things of this life, and the event of things we deal withal, runs in our heads, and tosseth us to and fro as billows in the sea, we are not only dispossessed of every good thought and every good care, but if any good thought or care be suggested unto us, it is quite choked by these worldly cares of this life. This is clearly proved by that in the parable of the seed, Mark iv. 18, 19, where it is said, that 'they that receive the seed among the thorns, are such as hear the word, but the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, enter in and choke the word, and it is unfruitful;' the cares of this world choke the word. Great reason then, ye see, why we should abandon this over much carefulness, because it is forbidden by the Holy Ghost, because it springeth from the ignorance or distrust of God's providence, because it is in vain and unprofitable, and because it is pernicious and hurtful. Add also hereunto, that 'the day hath enough with his own grief,' as our Saviour telleth us, Mat. vi. 34; as if he should have said, The care that every day brings with it, is enough to trouble ourselves withal, though we do not increase our present grief by the carefulness of this, how we may live in time to come.

This, then, may teach us to moderate our cares, that they be not excessive and unmeasurable. The prohibition of such carefulness is strait, the cause of it is evil, the use of it is none, the hurt of it is great. Let us not therefore suffer ourselves to be turmoiled with such cares. Let such cares be left unto the covetous worldling, which hath made the wedge of gold his god, which still crieth, 'Give, give,' and never saith he had enough, but the more he hath the more he craveth. Let him (for so he will) torment

himself with such cares; let his thoughts be troubled on his bed about joining house to house, and laying ground to ground, about his ships at sea, his merchandise at home, his sheep and oxen in the field; let his sleep depart from his eyes about his sales and bargains, his gains and losses, his debts and improvements; let him be distracted with cares as with wild horses, about the event of his business, the success of his labours, the maiutenance of wife and family; let all his days be sorrows, and his travel grief, and let his heart take no rest in the night. For this is just the case of him that immoderately scrapes and scratches, carks and cares, perhaps for an unthrist, perhaps for a stranger, perhaps for an enemy. He eats up, and wastes and consumes himself with care, and oftentimes enjoys no pleasure of that he hath. But let such care be far from us; and if such cares have surprised any of us, let us shake them off, and following the counsel of our apostle, let us be careful for nothing.

What, then! should we be idle, and careless, and let the world run as it listeth? Should we do nothing, care for nothing, but leave all things, as they say, to fortune, and let everything be as it may, and fall out as it can? Not so. We are not to be idle; no such thing spoken of in our apostle, but we are to labour and work, every man in his calling. We are to care, for not every care is forbidden here in our apostle, but we are not to be over-much careful for anything, so as the worldling careth, and killeth himself with care. We are not, when we have done what we can and ought, to cast all care away, and to leave all things, as they say, to the hazard, to fall out as they can; but the event and success to leave unto God, always depending upon him, and flying unto him by prayer, and supplication, and giving of thanks in all things, in prosperity and adversity, praying for good things, praying against evil things, giving of thanks for blessings received, and casting all our care upon God who careth for us; for to this purpose I take this which followeth in our apostle to be spoken, when he saith, 'But in all,' &c.

Whence I observe, that carefulness for the things of this life is so to be abandoned, that yet we cast our care upon the Lord, doing that we ought, but always depending upon him for the event and success, and flying unto him in all things by prayer and supplication, and giving of thanks. 'Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening,' as the psalmist speaketh, Ps. civ. 23, and therin he doth well; for 'man is born unto labour and travail, as the sparks fly upward,' Job v. 7, ever since it was said unto Adam, Gen. iii. 19, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.' So that the apostle maketh it a rule, 2 Thes. iii. 10, that 'he that will not work shall not eat.' But our care for a blessing upon our labours, for the success and event of our labours, that must be committed unto the Lord, that must be laid on him. So the prophet willetteth, Ps. xxxvii. 5,

where he saith, ‘Commit thy ways unto the Lord ; and trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.’ And again, Ps. lv. 22, ‘Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall nourish thee : he will not suffer the righteous to fall for ever.’ If there be anything that troubleth thee, or that thou wantest, commit all the care thereof unto the Lord, and stay thyself upon his providence, and undoubtedly thou shalt not want. So our blessed Saviour, Mat. vi. 30, ‘If God so clothe the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not do much more unto you, O ye of little faith ?’ What must be the conclusion but this, Cast therefore your care upon him ? And so the apostle Peter wills us, 1 Peter v. 7, ‘Cast all your care on God, for he careth for you.’ This, then, must be our care, to do that we ought, and then to commit the blessing of all unto the Lord. We may not carelessly fling off all care of our matters, but we must carefully commend them unto God, and depend upon him for his blessing upon them, and success unto them. In all things we must have this care, by humble and hearty prayer to fly unto the Lord, to pray unto him for the obtaining of such good things as we want, to pray unto him for deliverance from evils, either now presently upon us, or which we fear may fall upon us, and to give him thanks for such blessings as in the riches of his mercy he hath vouchsafed unto us. This care God requireth of us, and this care the godly have always had, as might largely have been proved, if time had given leave ; and this is the Christian and godly care which now I command unto you, faithfully to do the duties of your calling, committing your ways unto the Lord, depending upon his providence always, and in all things flying unto him by humble and hearty prayer, with giving of thanks.

Let this, then, first teach us, not to be idle, or careless in matters ; for this is not the thing forbidden, to

labour, or to do the works of our calling, but to be too, too careful about that we do, or have to do ; and though we may not be too, too careful about that we do, or have to do, yet may we not be careless, or say, as the manner of some is, let the world wag as it list, care shall neither kill me nor touch me. This carelessness beseemeth not the children of God, but is a note of wreckless persons, such as not only cast all care away, but also all honesty, godliness, and goodness. As therefore too much carefulness, so let this carelessness be far from every one of us.

Secondly, Let this teach us so to labour and do all that we have to do, as that still we depend upon the Lord his providence and care over us, and in all things fly unto him by prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks. It is he that must bless our labours, and give a good end unto our business. We only can do that we ought to do, and then commend both it and ourselves unto the Lord, in humble and hearty prayer ; which if it were so well thought of as it should be, many of our politic plots and devices might very well be spared ; for we plot, and devise, and cast, and wind up and down about this matter and that matter, as if we by our main wit would bring that to pass, which the Lord otherwise either could not or would not. Well, the best plot that I can tell you of is this, faithfully do ye that which ye ought to do, pray unto the Lord for his blessing upon it, and so commit it unto him, that he may do in it what he will, and what seemeth best unto him. This, I am sure, is the best plot, because the most Christian. Let this therefore be our Christian policy ; let us fear the Lord, and walk in his ways ; let us do the duties of our calling, whatsoever we have to do ; let us labour therein as we ought, and let us pray unto the Lord for his blessing upon it ; let us commit it unto him, and then let him do as he will.

LECTURE LXXXII.

*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall preserve your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.—
PHILIP. IV. 7.*

THESE words, as we have already heard, divide themselves into three branches ; first, a dehortation, in these words, ‘Be nothing,’ &c. ; secondly, an exhortation, in these, ‘But in all things,’ &c. ; thirdly, a consequent or effect which will follow upon both, in these, ‘And the peace of God,’ &c.

Another thing there is which I would observe from the words of the exhortation of our apostle in this place. The chief scope and drift of his exhortation we have already heard, which is, that the Philippians would cast their care on God, and in all things run unto him by prayer, pouring out such prayers unto him as may be accepted with him, for his blessing upon what they do and desire, and for deliverance

from such evils as presently they suffer, or fear to follow. Where note that the apostle would have their requests to be shewed unto God by prayer and supplication, so that withal there should be joined giving of thanks. Whence I observe, that as prayer and supplication, so giving of thanks also is a necessary service of God, a necessary duty of a Christian. For, as there are many causes of our often approaching unto the throne of grace by prayer and supplication for blessings in good things, and deliverance from evil, so are there many causes of pouring out our souls before God in humble praise and hearty thanksgiving for blessings in good things, and deliverance from evil. Neither is there any whose wants or

miseries urge them unto prayer and supplication, which have not also such proofs of God's mercies and loving-kindness towards them, as may and ought to provoke them unto thanksgiving. Many are the blessings and graces for the body, for the soul, for this life present, for that that is to come, which enforce our prayers unto God that we may obtain them. Many are the evils touching the body, touching the soul, touching this life present, touching that that is to come, which enforce our supplications unto God that we may be delivered from them. And are there not as many blessings and graces corporal and spiritual, temporal and eternal, which the Lord hath already vouchsafed unto us? as many evils, corporal and spiritual, temporal and eternal, from which the Lord hath delivered us, which should enforce our praise and thanksgiving unto God? Yes, verily, but that rather we look unto the things which we would have, than unto the things which already we have received, we might as well see the one as the other. And hereupon it is, that as well praise and thanksgiving are commended by the Holy Ghost in the Scripture, as prayer and supplication, and that the godly in all ages have poured out their souls before God, as well in praise and thanksgiving, as in prayer and supplication. 'I exhort,' saith the apostle unto Timothy, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 'that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.' And to the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. v. 16, 17, 'Pray,' saith the apostle, 'continually, and in all things give thanks.' And look into the practice of the godly in all ages. Jacob praying unto the Lord to be delivered from the hand of his brother Esau, Gen. xxxii. 10, first praised him for the riches of his mercies towards him, ver. 11. The songs and psalms of thanksgivings which Moses and the Israelites, Deborah and Barak, Hannah and Mary, David and Jehoshaphat made unto the Lord, are not unknown unto them that have knowledge in the book of God. Paul likewise witnesseth of himself almost unto all the churches he wrote unto, that still in his prayers he gave thanks to God for them. And of him and Silas it is said, Acts xvi. 24, 25, that when they were cast into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, 'they prayed and sung a psalm unto God.' Nay, how often do we read that Christ's own mouth was filled with the praises of God, giving thanks in his miracles of feeding certain thousands with some few loaves and fishes, giving thanks when he instituted the holy supper, giving thanks because his Father had heard him, giving thanks for opening those things unto babes, which were hid from the wise, and men of understanding? Generally this note hath so well tuned at all times in the mouths of all God's children, that they have ever been ready to give thanks unto him in all things, even as ready to offer unto the Lord the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for benefits and blessings received, as to pour out their

prayers unto him for such graces of his Spirit as they stood in need of.

But is it so with us? Have our mouths been filled with the praises of the Lord, and with thanksgiving unto our God? When our wants have enforced us to prayers, have we remembered to praise the Lord for such mercies as we had received? Or hath not the song of praise and thanksgiving been either as a strange and dainty song unto us which we could not tune, or as an harsh and unpleasant song wherein we have had no delight? Have we not been as thoso ten* lepers, which being cleansed, never returned to give God praise? Luke xvii. 18. When famine, or sickness, or the sword, are upon us and our land, it may be that we will call an assembly, and fall down and kneel before the Lord our maker, and cry, and say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and deliver us from this sickness, or famine, or sword. It may be, I say, we will do so, though too, too seldom we do so. But when the Lord in mercy hath removed any of these his plagues from us, what sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving do we offer up unto him? Let the year 1588 witness against us, at which time the Invincible Army, as they called it, rose up to make war against us. When that mighty and cruel enemy was upon our coasts, and in the sight of our land displayed his banners against us, thinking to devour us at once, and to swallow us up quiek, then we called an holy assembly, and humbled ourselves before the Lord, and prayed unto him for deliverance out of the hands of our cruel enemies. But when he had wrought a mighty deliverance for us, even such a one as the world wondered at, and for which we might very well take up that of the prophet, Ps. cxxiv. 2-4, and say, 'If the Lord himself had not been on our side, when those enemies rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled agaist us; the waters had drowned us, and the stream had gone over our soul, yea, the deep waters of the proud had gone over our soul.' When, I say, the Lord had wrought such a mighty deliverance for us, how many of us, like unto good Jehoshaphat and his people, assembled ourselves, either the fourth day after, or at all after, in the valley of Berachah or blessing, to give thanks unto the Lord? In how many places did we meet together, to praise the Lord in the midst of the great congregation? Whatsoever were done in other places, no such matter here. We, indeed, of this place, whence others should have all good example, are so much afraid to seem forward in good things, that we are hardly or never drawn unto it, in time of common danger to fast and pray, or after deliverance from such danger to praise and give thanks. Our prayers for prince, for people, for peace, for prosperity, for rain, for fair weather, in time of famine, in time of war, in time of common sickness, and the like, which we use, are good, and very good. And were it

* 'Nine.'—ED.

not well that our requests were shewed unto God in prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks? If every man shall look unto himself, we shall all of us find a great defect in ourselves this way. For if the hand of the Lord be any way upon us, then we call upon him, and pray unto him; as for example, if we be sick, then we pour out our requests unto God for health, and for deliverance from that pain wherein we lie. But how many of us do then remember to praise the Lord, either for that health which before the Lord gave unto us, or for other good graces and blessings of the soul and of the body, wherewith even then we do abound? Nay, surely the pain of our sickness takes such hold on us, that only we remember it, and pray to be delivered from it, forgetting the praises of the Lord for other his mercies unto us. And afterward, when we are restored unto health, how many of us do sing a new song unto the Lord for it? We commend our physician, or such a potion that we took, or such a medicine that was applied, or such a diet that we kept, but not many of us sing the praises of the Lord, by whose only blessing upon those means we have recovered our health. I do instance only in this one example. But the like is to be said of other crosses. If we be in poverty, in imprisonment, in banishment; yea, if our head, or tooth, or toe do ache, and the like, we pour out our complaints before God, and make our prayers unto him. But how seldom are our requests shewed unto him with giving of thanks?

I dispute not the point, whether together with our prayers and supplications should always be joined praise and thanksgiving. Sure it is, that there is none of us all, in any such need or necessity, in any such misery or affliction, but we have many blessings of the Lord, for which we ought to be thankful. So that, as we have need to pray unto the Lord, so we have cause also to give thanks unto the Lord even then when we pray. But this is it which I urge, that as we are to pray unto the Lord for such things as we need, so we are to give thanks unto the Lord for such blessings as we have received. For this is true, that whatsoever it be that we ask, we are not worthy new blessings and graces, unless we be thankful for the old. And this is as true, that so our prayers are accepted with God, as we are thankful unto God. Our unthankfulness shuts out our prayers, that they enter not into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts. And amongst other our sins, in my judgment, our unthankfulness is one great cause why the hand of the Lord now a long time hath been, and yet is so heavy upon us. Of late, even by the space of a twelve-month, he hath given us great hope of removing one of his plagues of dearth and famine from us, by such seasonable seasons as he hath granted unto us. But have we sung songs of thanksgiving for this mercy of the Lord towards us? No, surely; and therefore now again he hath filled the clouds with rain, and threateneth us with unseasonable weather.

Let us, therefore, now at length return from our unthankfulness, and sing new songs of praises unto the Lord. Whosoever we have need, let us pray unto the Lord, but withal let us remember the loving mercies of the Lord towards us, and let us give him thanks for them. Otherwise our requests will sooner turn into murmuring complaints than unto acceptable prayers. As, therefore, the apostle exhorteth the Colossians, chap. iii. 17, so do I you, ‘Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,’ &c.; and as our apostle here saith, ‘Let your requests,’ &c.

And the peace of God, &c. This is the consequent or effect which will follow upon it, if we hearken unto the exhortation. If we shall be too, too careful for nothing, but in all things fly unto God by prayer, giving him thanks for blessings received, and pouring out our prayers and supplications unto him for such things as are necessary, what then? Then this will follow: the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall preserve your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, that ye fall not away from Christ Jesus by any inordinate affections, or wicked cogitations, through impatience or despair, but that ye have a quiet mind and conscience in all things, whatsoever do befall unto you. Now for the more particular explication of these things, we must understand, that where the apostle saith, *the peace of God*, he meaneth not that peace which is in God, and which is himself, but that peace which he communicateth unto us. Which yet is two-fold: one, which signifieth our reconciliation with God through Christ, whereof the angels speake in their song, Luke ii. 14, when they sung, ‘Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace;’ and whereof the apostle speaketh when he saith, Eph. ii. 17, that ‘Christ came and preached peace to them which were afar off, and to them which were near.’ In both which places, by *peace* is meant our reconciliation with God through Christ; and of this peace of God, the apostle here speaketh not. Another peace there is which God communicateth unto us, which is the peace and quietness of our mind and conscience, through our reconciliation with God by Jesus Christ, whereof the apostle speaketh when he saith, Rom. v. 1, that ‘being justified by faith, we have peace towards God through Jesus Christ.’ Where by *peace* is meant that quietness of mind and conscience which we have through our justification by faith in Christ Jesus. And of this our apostle here speaketh, and saith of it, that it ‘passeth all understanding,’ that is, that this inward peace of our mind and conscience, wrought in us by the power of the Spirit through our reconciliation with God, and justification by faith in the blood of Christ Jesus, is such a thing as all man’s understanding cannot reach unto or comprehend. This peace of God, then, which thus far passeth all reach of man’s understanding, the apostle tells the Philippians, if they hearken to his exhortation, shall ‘keep their hearts and minds,’ that

is, their whole souls, both the understanding and the sensitive part, 'in Christ Jesus,' so that neither through inordinate affections which are seated in the heart, nor through wicked cogitations in the mind, they should fall away from the faith of Christ Jesus in their heart, or from the knowledge of Christ Jesus in their mind. The sum of all is this, that if they will hearken unto his exhortation, to be nothing careful, but in all things to shew their requests unto God in prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks, then they shall have such a peace and quietness of mind and conscience, as far passeth all reach of man's understanding, which shall keep their hearts and minds, even their whole souls, in Christ Jesus, so that they shall not fall from him, either through inordinate affections, or wicked cogitations. I cannot stand upon the several observations which were hence to be made; I will only point at some of them, as time will give leave.

First, then, hence I observe, what the fruit or consequent is which followeth the laying aside of over much carefulness, and the reposing of ourselves in God by prayer in all our matters. The consequent or fruit which followeth upon it, is the peace of God, the peace which God giveth unto our minds and consciences, to keep, as with a garrison, our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. For whilst we are choked with the cares of this life, and thoughts do boil within our breasts as in a furnace of lead, whilst it is so that we cannot persuade ourselves to depend upon God for the event and success of our matters, unless our own cares also be continually employed about them, what peace or quietness can we have in our minds and consciences? The peace of our minds and consciences indeed consisteth in our reconciliation with God through Christ, in our justification by faith in the blood of Christ, as the apostle witnesseth in the place before alleged, Rom. v. 1, where he saith, that 'being justified by faith, we have peace towards God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' But what reconciliation with God, where the love of the world swayeth, that his thoughts are altogether set upon it, his cares are wholly employed about it? 'Know ye not,' saith James, chap. iv. 4, 'that the amity of the world is the enmity of God? Whosoever, therefore, maketh himself a friend of the world, maketh himself the enemy of God.' As good communion betwixt light and darkness, as good concord betwixt Christ and Belial, as good agreement betwixt the temple of God and idols, as betwixt the love of God and the love of the world. And therefore John saith, 1 John ii. 15, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' So that where there is this excessive love of the world, as to carry all our cares and thoughts after it, it is a sign that there is no reconciliation with God, and therefore no peace of conscience. But if we shall lay aside all worldly and distrustful carefulness, and cast our care upon the Lord; if we shall walk as we ought, and commit our ways unto the Lord; if we shall pray unto

the Lord for his blessing upon that we do, and depend on him for the event and success, hence will follow this peace of God, this peace of conscience which God giveth, which our apostle here speaketh of. For albeit these things be not precisely the cause of our peace of conscience, but our reconciliation with God, yet we see the promise of the Holy Ghost, that this peace shall follow these things, to keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Which fruit, to have followed that practice in the godly at all times, might easily be proved, if time would give leave.

But for this time let us make this use hereof, to abandon over much carefulness for anything; in all things to fly unto God by prayer, to commit all our ways unto him, and to depend upon him for all things we have to do or deal withal. For what is more to be desired of man in this world, than the peace of God which passeth all understanding? than to have our hearts and minds kept in Christ Jesus? Seeing, then, this is the fruit which the Lord maketh to follow thereupon, let us hearken to the exhortation of our apostle, let us be nothing careful, but in all things, &c.; and then the peace of God, &c.

Secondly, In that this peace is called the peace of God, hence I observe the author of our peace of conscience, which is God through Christ. Whereunto the apostles give witness in every of their epistles almost, when they pray for 'grace and peace' unto the churches to which they write, 'from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,' that is, from God, who gives it in, through, and for, the Lord Jesus Christ. And hereupon it is that God is often called 'the God of peace,' because he is the author of our peace; and that Christ is called 'our peace,' because through him we have peace. And why is God said to be the author of our peace through Christ? Even because by Christ he hath reconciled us unto himself; as the apostle witnesseth where he saith, 2 Cor. v. 18, that 'God hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ; for God,' saith he, 'was in Christ, and reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing their sins unto them.' This is it that makes our peace of conscience, even our reconciliation with God; we know that God's wrath is appeased towards us, that the partition wall which was between God and us is broken down, that God hath received us into grace and favour through Jesus Christ his Son, and therefore all is at peace within, our soul and conscience is quiet and free from all fear and care. There is a peace of the world, when we are quiet and free from troubles, wars, and the like; but what is this peace unto that other? Though we want this outward peace, and have that inward peace, we have the greatest peace and quietness that may be; but if there want this inward peace, what outward peace soever thereto be, what peace is there? Surely where the want of this peace of conscience is, there is already a torment of hell.

If, then, they of Tyrus and Sidon made so great

account of that outward peace, that by all means they desired it of Herod, Acts xii. 20; and if the Jews, having obtained great outward quietness through Felix, acknowledged it wholly, and in all places, with all thanks, chap. xxiv. 2, 3; what prayers ought we to make unto our God for this inward peace of conscience; and feeling it in our own souls and consciences, how thankfully ought we to acknowledge it unto our God? Surely for this grace and peace, we ought to offer up the calves of our lips in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, yea, to give up our whole bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable serving of God. Seeing, then, that we have this peace of all peaces through our Lord Jesus Christ, let us acknowledge it wholly, and in all places, with all thanks.

Thirdly, Hence I observe the excellency of this inward peace of conscience which God giveth unto his children, it passeth all reach of man's understanding. For in man's reason and understanding, who more wretched than the children of God? With whom is God more displeased than with his own children? They are hated, reviled, persecuted, afflicted; they are scorned, imprisoned, banished, and made the world's wonder. So that, as it was prophesied of Christ, that he should be judged as 'plagued, and smitten of God, and humbled,' so the world judgeth of faithful Christians, that they are plagued and punished of God for their sins and their iniquities. And they think they have good reason so to judge. And if it be answered, that though their outward man be disquieted, yet in that they have peace of conscience, they have quietness enough; they cannot skill of this, what this inward peace should be, which should give them such quietness. That a man when he is reviled should bless, when he is persecuted should suffer it, when he is evil spoken of should pray, when he hath nothing, should be as if he possessed all things, when he may seem to have cause of despair, should abound in hope, when he is in tribulation should rejoice in tribulation, and all through the inward peace of their conscience by their reconciliation with God, this is a thing which seems as absurd to them as anything can be; this knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for them, they cannot attain it; it is without the compass of their understanding, they cannot tell what to make of it. And, therefore, saith our Saviour unto his disciples, John xiv. 27, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' Nay, the world knoweth not that peace which God giveth unto us, but calleth that peace which indeed is no peace, crying, 'Peace, peace,' when their destruction hasteth upon them.

Let this, then, teach God's children to joy and rejoice in that peace of conscience which God hath given them through Christ. It is a grace of God which the wicked of the world feel not, nor know what it meaneth,

and which the world neither can give, nor take away from us. If we have this we have all, howsoever we seem to want all; and if we want this, we want all, howsoever we seem to have all. If we have this peace within us, we have God with us, and therefore, howsoever the devil rage, and all the world say all manner of evil sayings, and practise all manner of wickedness against us, yet herein we may rejoice, and herein let us rejoice.

Lastly, Hence I observe a testimony and a plain proof for the perseverance of God's children in the faith and knowledge of Christ Jesus. For the peace of God shall keep their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, as saith the apostle. If we ourselves were left unto ourselves, to keep ourselves in Christ Jesus, quickly might we fall from Christ, and depart away from our living God. But not we ourselves, but the peace of God, and the God of peace, shall keep us in Christ Jesus. How, then, shall he fall that is thus kept from falling? Again, if it were only said that we are kept in Christ Jesus, the question might haply be the greater, albeit it be in truth out of question that he whom the Lord keepeth shall never fall; but it is said that the peace of God shall keep us, as garrison soldiers keep their city from the invasion of any enemy. So that the peace of God, and the God of peace, shall be unto us as a garrison of soldiers to keep us in Christ Jesus, that we fall not away from him. And being thus kept, how shall we fall? Again, what is it that not we ourselves, but the peace of God, shall keep, and that thus strongly? Is it our body or our goods? No; these are not the things wherein our salvation consisteth. For though these perish, yet our salvation may be sure with our God. But the peace of God shall preserve our hearts, whereby we believe unto salvation, and our minds, the subject of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; he shall keep them in Christ Jesus, that we fall not from him. He shall preserve our hearts from inordinate affections, that we may trust perfectly on the grace of God; he shall preserve our minds from wicked cogitations, that we may abound in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; he shall preserve even both in Christ Jesus, that in neither we fall from him. For if either our hearts only be sound, and our minds corrupt, then is our faith in vain; or if our minds only be sound, and not our hearts, then our knowledge is in vain. But he shall preserve even both in Christ Jesus, that neither there be zeal without knowledge, nor knowledge without zeal, but that we abound and continuo. Shall, then, not ourselves, but the peace of God, preserve and keep as strongly as may be, not our bodies or goods, but our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, that we fall not away from the faith and knowledge of Christ Jesus? And is not here evidence enough for our perseverance in grace, if we be careful for nothing, but in all things, &c.? These things should and might have been enlarged.

The comfort which hence may arise unto the godly,

passeth the tongue, or pen, or understanding of any man. I must leave it unto the meditation of every godly soul. Only with the apostle now I say unto

yon, 'be nothing careful,' &c., and then assure yourselves of the consequent, that 'the peace of God,' &c.

LECTURE LXXXIII.

Furthermore, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 8.

BESIDES certain particular exhortations unto some particular persons, we have heard in this chapter divers exhortations unto the Philippians in general : one unto perseverance, that they would 'so continue in the Lord,' as they had been taught in the Lord, ver. 1 ; another unto a Christian joy, that they would 'rejoice in the Lord always,' ver. 4 ; another unto a patient moderation in their whole life and behaviour, that their 'patient' and gentle 'mind might be known unto all men,' ver. 5 ; and another to the laying aside of all worldly and distrustful carefulness, and reposing of ourselves in all things in God, by humble and hearty prayer, with giving of thanks, ver. 6. Whereunto the apostle also joined the consequent or effect which should follow the abandoning of worldly and distrustful carefulness, and the reposing of ourselves in God by prayer, which is, that 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall preserve our hearts, &c.' His first exhortation, unto perseverance, was, lest they should suffer themselves to be seduced and drawn from the truth which he had taught them, by those false teachers which were crept in amongst them. His second exhortation, unto a Christian joy, was, lest they should suffer themselves to be daunted or dismayed when persecution, or affliction, or any other cross, should befall them. His third exhortation, unto a patient moderation in their whole life and behaviour, was, that all men, seeing their patient and gentle mind, might thereby the rather be brought to glorify God, and to embrace the truth of the gospel of Christ Jesus. His fourth exhortation, to the laying aside of too worldly carefulness, and the reposing of ourselves in God by prayer, with giving of thanks, was, to direct them in a Christian course for all the things of this life, and the event of all things they had to deal withal. His adjoining of the consequent or effect which will follow upon it, was the rather to induce them to take that Christian course whereunto he directed them.

Furthermore, whatsoever things be. After such diverse exhortations of the apostle unto the Philippians as we have heard, the apostle now, for a general conclusion of his exhortations, exhorteth them generally unto whatsoever thing is good in the life of man, that as they had been taught by word and by example, so they would frame their lives to the rule of all holiness and righteousness. Some general heads of things the apostle pointeth at, 'as things true, things honest,

things just, things pure, things worthy love, things of good report ;' but, not standing upon any of them, he exhorteth them to think on, and to do whatsoever things are of any of these kinds, and generally, whatsoever besides these is virtuous and commendable, which they had either heard him teach, or seen him do, adding withal this promise thereto, that so the God of peace should be with them. When he saith *furthermore*, it is as if he had thus said, Not to stand upon farther particulars, which would be too tedious, let me for a general conclusion of my exhortations at this time unto you, only put you in mind of some general heads of Christian duties, which I would have you to think on and to do ; and then beseech you besides to think on, and to do whatsoever besides them hath the commendation of any virtue, and whatsoever is praiseworthy, even whatsoever ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me. First, then, he commendeth unto them 'whatsoever things are true,' exhorting them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are true ; true in opinion, that they may be free from error ; true in word, that they may be free from leasing ; true in deed, that they may be free from all hypocrisy and dissimulation ; whatsoever things are indeed any way true, he would have them to think on them and to do them. Secondly, he commendeth unto them 'whatsoever things are honest,' or as the word rather signifieth, whatsoever things do set them out with an holy gravity, exhorting them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things have in them a reverent and comely gravity, that what things are grave and comely for their persons, they may say and do ; and such things as are light and unbeseeming them in attire, or gesture, or word, or deed, they may fly and avoid. Thirdly, he commendeth unto them 'whatsoever things are just,' &c., exhorting them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are just, that every man may have his right of them, and that which is due unto them, that no man may be defrauded by them, that as they would have others to do unto them, so they may do unto others. Fourthly, he commendeth unto them 'whatsoever things are pure,' exhorting them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are pure, that in their lives they may be unspotted, and in their words and deeds undefiled, being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. Fifthly, he commendeth unto them 'whatsoever things pertain to love,' or whatsoever things

may make them lovely, exhorting them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things may make them lovely, and win them love and favour with all men, yet so with men, that with God also. Sixthly, he commendeth unto them ‘whatsoever things are of good report,’ exhorting them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are of good report amongst men, that by such things they may purchase to themselves a good report amongst men, and be free from such speeches and censures as things of evil report might easily bring upon them. Lastly, having thus pointed at these general heads of Christian duty, generally he commendeth unto them whatsoever thing besides these hath in it commendation of virtue or matter of praise, exhorting them, that if, besides these things already spoken of, ‘there be any virtue,’ that is, any thing which hath in it commendation of virtue, or ‘if there be any’ praise,’ or any thing praiseworthy with good men, they should think on, even seriously and advisedly these things, letting those things of ceremony to pass which the false teachers urged. Whereunto, that he might the rather persuade them, first, he tells them, that these things which now he commendeth unto them, and whereunto now he exhorteth them, are no new things, such as they never knew nor heard of, but such as both they had learned by hearing, and received by instruction, and heard at his mouth, and seen in him, in the practice of his life; and, therefore, as before he willed them to think on them, so now he willeth them to do them, that, knowing them and doing them, they might have the full commendation of them. Secondly, he promiseth them, that if thus they shall think on, and do, these things whereunto he hath exhorted them, then the God of peace shall be with them, to give unto them the peace of conscience, and a peaceable life amongst men, so far forth as may be for his glory and their good. This I take to be the meaning of these words. The branches, then, into which they divide themselves, ye see, are an exhortation, and two reasons or motives to enforce the exhortation. The exhortation is, to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are true, &c. The former motive to induce them hereunto is drawn from the things themselves, whereunto he exhorteth them, which were no new things, but such as both they had learned, and received, and heard, and seen, in his own example. The latter motive to induce them is a promise, that the God of peace shall be with them, if they will think on and do these things. Thus much of the meaning of these words, and of the things therein contained. Now let us see what notes we may gather hence for our further use and instruction.

First, then, to begin with the most general, here I note, that if there be any virtue, any praise, any thing that is good, any thing that is commendable, the apostle would have the Philippians seriously to think on it with themselves, and diligently to practise it in their lives, whatsoever it be. Whence I observe this

note for us and for all Christians, that we all of us ought to have our hearts set, and our feet pressed, to follow whatsoever is good and commendable among the sons of men. And this is plainly proved out of the writings of the prophets and apostles. Thus saith the prophet David, Ps. xxxiv. 14, and out of him the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 11, ‘Eschew evil, and do good,’ neither of them insisting upon any particular good, but exhorting or commanding to do good, even whatsoever is good and commendable. So our apostle, 1 Thess. v. 15, ‘Ever follow,’ saith he, ‘that which is good, both toward yourselves, and toward all men.’ Where the apostle would have the Thessalonians, so far from recompensing evil for evil unto any man, that he would have them forward and ready to do whatsoever is good unto all men. It is then, ye see, a duty required of us, to follow whatsoever is good and commendable, or as the apostle speaketh, Rom. xii. 17, to ‘procure things honest in the sight of all men.’ And if we must needs have motives to draw us on to this duty, because otherwise we are too, too dull and slow, behold what the apostle saith to this purpose, Rom. ii. 10, ‘To every man,’ saith he, ‘that doth good, shall be glory, and honour, and peace.’ But what should other motive need than this, that whatsoever is good, is only good by participation with God, who alone is good, as our Saviour tells us, Mat. xix. 17, truly, and properly, and of his own nature good? For if it be so, that whatsoever is good, is only good by participation with God, ‘from whom alone cometh every good giving and every perfect gift,’ James i. 17, then surely, unless we will in some sort renounce God, we must embrace and follow whatsoever is good, everything that is good having the expressed image of God in it, so far as it is good.

Only we must take heed, ‘lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety,’ under a show and colour of good, persuading her that that was good which indeed was evil, so the world or the devil deceive us, under a show and colour of good, and persuade us that that is good which is not, that that is praiseworthy which is not. For not that which the world judgeth to be good is always good, but that only which the Lord alloweth for good in his word; neither is that always praiseworthy which the world praiseth, but that only which the Lord praiseth. It is good, saith the world, to save a man’s life, though it be by a lie, or by perjury; and if a man frame himself to the fashion of the world, the world praiseth him. But doth the Lord either approve him for good, when he reproveth them that do evil, that good may come thereof? Rom. iii. 8; or praise the other, when he doth by his apostle, Rom. xii. 2, tenderly beseech us not to fashion ourselves like unto the world? We must, then, look unto the thing, whether it be good and commendable, and such as the Lord approveth for good and commendable. And if it be, then whatsoever it be, we ought in our hearts

to embrace it, in our lives to practise it, and with eager liking to follow after it. Neither let any man thus say with himself, There are some good and commendable things which I could like very well to think on and to do, but that they are in such request and liking with the papists, or with some that otherwise are profane and wicked men. For whatsoever is good, in whomsoever it be, we are to love it, and to like it. If wicked Balaam, that loved the wages of unrighteousness, make his prayer, Num. xxiii. 10, and say, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,' shall I refuse to use this prayer because he used it? Nay, if Simon Magus, when he hath sinned, Acts viii. 24, request the apostles to pray unto the Lord for him, I will take this lesson from him, to request the prayers of the faithful for me, when I have sinned against my God. We may not communicate with any either in any superstition, or in any unfruitful works of darkness. But whatsoever is good, if it be indeed truly good, we are to think on it, and to do it; we are to love it, and to like it, and to make it a precedent for us to follow, in whomsoever it be.

Let this, then, first, teach us to abstain from all appearance of evil. For thus we are to reason with ourselves: Are we to think on and to do whatsoever is good and commendable? Then whatsoever is evil and blameworthy, we are not to think on, not to do. That which is good is only to busy all our thoughts, and to take up all our actions; but whatsoever is evil is not once to enter into our thoughts, much less may it be the work of our hands. The prophet, Ps. xxxvi. 4, speaketh of a generation of men that imagine mischief upon their beds, and set themselves in no good way, neither abhor anything that is evil. It were well there were no such at this day, whose inward thoughts are very wickedness, whose works are only evil, whose ways tend wholly unto death. But generally this is true, that men very well minded, yet smell of some cask or other; either they are covetous, or proud, or ambitious, or unmerciful, or contentious, or partially affected, or the like. We do not think on and do whatsoever is good, we do not wash our hands of whatsoever is evil, but one bad thing or other there is which so haunts every one of us, that we always carry it in our bosom with us. Well, we see whereon our thoughts should be set, and whereabout we should be occupied: whatsoever is good, whatsoever is commendable, we should think on that, and do that; and he that instructeth us in this duty, withal doth imply, that whatsoever is evil should not once enter our thoughts, much less should be the trade of our way. Let us, therefore, follow that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil; let us, as many as fear the Lord, depart from iniquity, and let our souls delight in whatsoever is good and commendable.

Secondly, Let this teach us wisely to consider our

ways, what is indeed and truly good and commendable. For not whatsoever thing seemeth unto us, or is thought by others to be good and commendable, are we exhorted here to think on and to do; but to think on and to do whatsoever is indeed and truly good and commendable. It is thought in some countries, nay, I may say it is thought among us (for unto a high degree of excess are we grown that way), that to booze and carouse, to quaff cup after cup, and to bear his drink well, is a very commendable thing. Here, then, we are to look whether it be indeed commendable. For if it be, then we are to do it, by our apostle's rule in this place. But what saith the Spirit? Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed,' saith our Saviour, 'to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be oppressed with surfeiting and drunkenness.' The apostle goeth further, and saith, 1 Cor. v. 11, 'If any that is called a brother be a drunkard, with such one eat not.' The prophet goeth yet further, and denounceth a woe against drunkards, saying, Isa. v. 11, 'Woe to them that rise up early to follow drunkenness.' And the apostle openeth the woe thus, 1 Cor. vi. 10, that they 'shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Oh, but thou canst bear thy drink well, and there is thy commendation. Well, yet see thy woe; 'Woe,' saith the prophet, Isa. v. 22, 'to them that are mighty to drink wine, and to them that are strong to pour in strong drink.' If thou exceed in drinking, thy sin is drunkenness, how well soever thou bear thy drink, and a woe is unto thee. I instance only in this sin, because this sin hath so much dared to brave itself amongst us. But as in this, so in many other things, it may be found that howsoever they be thought commendable, yet indeed they are not. Let us, therefore, look unto the thing that seemeth unto us, or is thought by others, to be good and commendable; and if it be indeed such, so that it have allowance from the Lord in his word to be such, then let us think on it, and do it. But, in any case, let not the judgment of the world so sway with us, as that upon the world's word we think on and do whatsoever seemeth good and commendable unto it.

Thirdly, Let this teach us to suppress that conceit of not following something which is good, because it is in such request with them which otherwise are not good. For whatsoever is good, if it be indeed good, in whomsoever it be, we are to love it, and to like it, to think on it, and to do it. What needs it to will any of us to take up a piece of gold, though it be out of a dunghill? Howsoever, therefore, the man be superstitions, loose of life, profane and wicked, yet if there be any good thing in him, let us not disdain it or refuse it because of him, but let us observe it, and think on it, and do it. If there be any virtue, any praise, anything that is good, anything that is commendable indeed, wheresoever it is, let not that cause us to balk it, but let us think on it, and do it. And let this suffice for the general, of thinking on and

doing whatsoever is good and commendable. Now come we to the general heads of such good and commendable things as the apostle commendeth unto the Philippians.

Secondly, then, here I note that the apostle would have the Philippians seriously to think on with themselves, and diligently to practise in their lives, whatsoever things are true. Whence I observe this note, for us and for all men, that whatsoever things are true, we are to think on them, and to do them. Is it a truth in religion? We are to embrace it, and profess it; as we see our apostle was not disobedient to the heavenly vision which appeared to him in the way, but having the eyes of his understanding opened by the Lord's Spirit, he straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, Acts ix. 20, and professed the truth in all integrity and simplicity. Is it a truth in the words of our mouth? We ought every man to speak the truth unto his neighbour, as Zechariah willeth, saying, Zech. viii. 16, 'Speak every man the truth unto his neighbour;' and after him the apostle, saying, Eph. iv. 25, 'Cast off lying, and speak every man truth unto his neighbour.' Is it a truth in our deeds, and in the ways of our life? We are to be as Nathanaels, John i. 47, true 'Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile,' and not to make show of one thing, and in truth to be another thing. whatsoever truth it is, it ought to be so precious unto us, as that with the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 8, we should say, 'We cannot do anything against the truth, but for the truth;' we cannot hold of error against the truth, we cannot lie to falsify the truth, we cannot dissemble to make show of others than the truth is we are. Let this one reason for this time serve to press this point. Christ is truth, as himself saith, John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life;' and whatsoever he spake was truth, and for the truth, for 'no guile was ever found in his mouth,' 1 Peter ii. 22. We are the sons of him who is truth, that is, of God; we are redeemed by him who is truth, that is, by God; we are regenerate and born again by the Spirit of truth; we are called to the knowledge of the truth; and so we shall dwell with God for ever, if we speak the truth from our heart. As, then, we will have him who is true, and truth itself, to be our God, and ourselves to be his people and heirs of his kingdom, we are to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are true.

Are we, then, to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are true? First, let this teach us to take heed and beware of errors in religion, whereby the truth of the gospel of Christ Jesus is perverted. Whosoever saith it, if it be a truth, it is to be maintained; but if it be an error from the truth, whosoever saith it, it is to be rejected. If fathers, councils, church, and all say it, if it be an error, what is that to me? But if it be a truth, be it Arian, or Lutheran, or Papist, or Protestant that saith it, what is that to me? No

authority may give warrant to an error, neither may any man's person or profession prejudice a truth; but whatsoever is true, we are to think on it, and do it; whatsoever is erroneous, we are not to think on it, not to do it. What shall we say, then, unto them that wholly build upon 'the church, the church,' and ever run on us with open mouths, 'the doctrine of the church, the doctrine of the church,' and this church, forsooth, is the church of Rome? What shall we say unto them that, having laid down and taught a truth, afterwards perceiving themselves therein to concur with Calvin, did therefore revoke it, and turned the truth into an error? We say unto them as Isaiah said unto the Jews in his time, chap. viii. 19, 20, 'Should not a people inquire at their God? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' The thing that we ask is, What is a truth according to the word, what is an error from the word? Not what the church teacheth, or what Calvin saith. If they can shew that the things which their church teacheth are true, we profess our willingness to embrace whatsoever things are true; and if Calvin say the truth, why should they reject it because he sayeth it? Learn you to discern between truth and error; and look not so much who sayeth it, as whether it be true or erroneous that is said. If the church, or some special professors of the truth, agree upon a truth, it may very well sway with us. But howsoever men say, a truth in religion is therefore to be received because it is a truth, and an error therefore to be rejected because it is an error. If it be a truth, receive it; if an error, reject it.

Again, are we to think on and to do whatsoever things are true? Let this, then, teach us to put away lying out of our mouths. whatsoever things are true, we are to speak them in their due times and places; but whatsoever things are lies and falsehoods, there is no time or place for the speaking of them. For all lying is of the devil, and he is the father thereof, John viii. 44, And fearful is the judgment that lying draweth on with it; for 'whosoever,' saith John, Rev. xxi. 27, 'worketh abomination or lies, shall not enter into the heavenly Jerusalem;' and again, chap. xxii. 15, 'Without shall be dogs, and enchanters, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth or maketh lies.' And therefore the Holy Ghost very often very carefully forbiddeth it, saying, Col. iii. 9, 'Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his works;' and again, Eph. iv. 25, 'Cast off lying,' &c. And yet see how men love rather to lie than to speak truly; as if they had rather run with the devil, than walk in truth with God. One desperately lieth in despite of the truth, and boasteth himself of his lying. Another lieth, hoping so to conceal his sins as he hath fallen into, and so addeth iniquity to iniquity. Another lieth, but it is, forsooth, in jest, and he

meaneth no harm by his lying. And another lieth, but it is, forsooth, greatly for the behoof and good of his friend, or else he would not do it. Thus lying, which the Lord so much hateth, everywhere aboundeth. And though none indeed can, yet some think they may, plead pardon for their lying. The desperate liar, it may be, hopeth not for, nor reckoneth upon, any pardon. He hath made a covenant with death, and with hell he is at agreement. And what pardon he hopeth for, I know not, that to conceal his other faults and sins, also lieth. But if two sins be not to be bound together, because in one we shall not be unpunished, then what hope of impunity when unto other sins is added also lying? Now, for lying in jest, no man, I think, will say that it is either a less fault, or more pardonable, than an idle word; and yet we see our blessed Saviour tells us, Mat. xii. 36, that 'of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment.' And as for lying for the behoof and good of our friend, the apostle thereby plainly condemneth it, Rom. iii. 8, in that we may not do evil, by his rule, that good may come thereof. So that we may not lie at all, forasmuch as 'no lie is of the truth,' 1 John ii. 21. Some kind of lying is less faulty than other, but no lie is of the truth, and we are to speak every man truth unto his neighbour. Let us, therefore, cast off all lying, even all kind of lying. For the 'lying lips are an abomination to the Lord,' Prov. xii. 22, and their judgment sleepeth not. For 'a false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape,' chap. xix. 5. Let us speak the truth every man one unto another, for we are members one of another. Let us speak every man the truth from his heart, without mincing it, and speaking it by halves. The truth will bear out itself; speak, therefore, the truth, and shame the devil. By speaking the truth we are like unto God, but by lying we are like unto the devil. Whatsoever things, therefore, are true, let us think on them, and do them.

Again, are we to think on and to do whatsoever things are true? Let this then, thirdly, teach us to

be that in truth which we would seem unto the world to be, avoiding all hypocrisy and dissimulation. Would we seem unto the world to be religious towards God, just in our dealing with men, chaste in our bodies, harmless in our lives, merciful to the poor, despisers of the world, &c.? Let us be such in deed and in truth, not in word and in show only. 'For the hypocrite,' as saith Job, chap. xiii. 16, 'shall not come before God.' And therefore Peter, 1 Peter ii. 1, willeth us to 'lay aside all malice, and all guile, and dissimulation.' But who hearkeneth or regardeth? How many at this day, like unto Judas, seem to kiss, when indeed they do betray? How many at this day, like unto Absalom, make a show of inviting their friends unto their table, when indeed their meaning is, if not to kill them, yet to snare and entrap them? How many, like unto Joab, seem to speak peaceably with their friend, when indeed their purpose is to wound him? How many, like unto the Jews that came to Nehemiah, Neh. vi. 19, speak fair to a man's face, but speak their pleasure of him behind his back, and seek what they can to thwart him, or to disgrace him, or to discredit him? Yea, who now more commonly defameth a man, exalteth himself against him, and imagineth mischief for him, than his own companion, his familiar friend, with whom he took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends, as it fell out with David? So little truth there is in the ways and works of men, and so deep dissembling in their whole lives. So that we may well take up that of the prophet, Ps. xii. 1, 'The faithful are failed from among the children of men. Men speak deceitfully every one with his neighbour: they flatter with their lips, and dissemble with their double heart.' But, Job viii. 13, 'The hypocrite's hope shall perish, his confidence also shall be cut off, and his trust shall be as the house of a spider.' Let us, therefore, hate all hypocrisy and dissimulation; as we would seem to be, so let us be indeed, such as we ought to be; and whatsoever things are true in religion, in word or in deed, let us think on them, and do them.

LECTURE LXXXIV.

Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 8.

WHATSOEVER things are honest. Here is the second general head of that Christian duty which the apostle commendeth unto the Philippians, wherein he exhorteth them to think on, and to do whatsoever things may grace them with a reverent and comely gravity, that their gravity in all things pertaining to them being such as beseemeth their persons, they may so purchase unto themselves reverence amongst men. For so I understand the word used by

our apostle in this place. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that whatsoever things beseem our persons, we are to do them, and that with such a comely gravity as may win reverence unto our persons. This duty the apostle prescribeth unto Titus, and in him unto all ministers, where he saith, Titus ii. 7, 'Above all things shew thyself an example of good works, with uncorrupt doctrine, gravity, integrity,' &c.; where, besides other things, ye see, he requireth in Titus, and

so in other ministers of the gospel, gravity; that is, such an outward grave carriage of themselves, as may win reverence unto their persons. This duty he prescribeth also to elder men, in the same chapter, saying, ver. 2, that they ought to be 'sober, honest,' &c.; honest, that is, grave, even with such a gravity as may join reverence to their persons. And this duty in this place he prescribeth even unto all, that we all labour unto such a gravity as best beseemeth our persons, whatsoever we be. Neither let any man here so mistake me, as if I meant, that in any man there should be such an austerity that a man may hardly come to the sight or speeche of him. For the servant of God should be meek, and kind, and gentle, and courteous unto all men, even as the apostle exhorteth, saying, Eph. iv. 32, 'Be ye courteous one unto another.' But this is it I say, that in all men, according to their places and persons, there ought to be a comely gravity, in some more, in some less, but in all such as beseemeth them, and may join reverence to their persons.

This, then, should teach us to take heed and beware of such lightness as is any way unbeseeming our persons; of lightness in our attire and apparel, of lightness in our gait and gesture, of lightness in our talk and speech, of lightness in our actions and deeds. For gravity in all these things is not more beseeming, than any such lightness is utterly unbeseeming in any man. To see a minister wear this shag and ruffian-like hair, which is too, too common among all sorts of men; to see him turn himself into every cut, and every new fashion of apparel that comes up; or to hear him bring into the pulpit rhyming stuff and scurrile jests to move laughter; to see a magistrate drinking and carousing among boon companions, or dancing about a May-pole, or running into such folly as he should restrain in others; to see an ancient matron mincing her treadings, or tricking and trimming herself like unto one of the younger sort, or any way wantonly carrying herself; to see a young woman full of talk, or much abroad in the streets, or familiar with others than of her own sex; to see a scholar courting young women, or frequenting taverns, inns, or ale-houses, or sporting himself any way lasciviously; generally, to see a man more garish in his attire and apparel, more nice in his gait and gesture, more vain in his talk and speech, more unreverent in his actions and deeds, than is meet for his place and calling, how unbeseeming is it! How disgraceful is it to their persons that offend any of these ways! A man's garment, saith the son of Sirach,* and his excessive laughter, and his going, declare what person he is. Lightness in these things shew that he is light, and consequently his credit amongst men, and that worthily, is also light. And yet how much do all sorts offend this way! Ministers and magistrates, ancient matrons and young women, scholars, and men generally! Unto every of these, a reverence beseemeth them is

due; which yet they want, because there wanteth in themselves that gravity which beseemeth their persons, and whereby they should win reverence unto their persons. For here, in my judgment, is one very great cause of that want of reverence which is everywhere. We complain greatly, and not without just cause, of great want of reverence in the younger sort towards their elders and their betters in their places; but certainly here is one great cause of it, we ourselves, every man in his place, walk not in that gravity that beseemeth our persons; we are not of that discreet and seemly carriage which should win reverence unto us in our places; but not considering ourselves one way or other, we bewray that vanity, that lightness, that foolishness, and oftentimes that boyishness in ourselves which causeth want of reverence, and bringeth contempt unto our persons. Well, ye see our apostle would have us to think on and to do whatsoever things are grave, and decent, and beseeming our persons in our places. Let us hearken unto our apostle, and let us, every man, consider himself, and do that which is grave and beseeming us in our places. Let us avoid, both in our apparel, and in our gesture, and in our talk, and in our deeds, whatsoever may bewray any kind of lightness in us. So shall we do that which in this point we ought, and so shall we recover that reverence which we have lost.

Whatsoever things are just. This is the third general head of that Christian duty which the apostle commandeth to the Philippians; wherein he exhorteth them to think on and to do whatsoever things are just, that every one may have that which is right, and none may be defrauded of that which is due unto him. For the apostle's speech here of just things, is meant (I take it) of things which may be justly required of us, that such should be performed; not of things which we may justly require of others; for such things we will exact fast enough, though we be not exhorted thereunto. Henee, then, I observe this lesson for us, that whatsoever things may justly be required of us, we are to think on them and to do them. May the Lord justly require a duty of us, and may the prince justly require a duty of us? 'Give unto God those things which are God's, and give unto Cæsar those things which are Cæsar's,' Mat. xxii. 21. That obedience which is due unto the Lord, give unto him; and that loyalty which is due unto the prince, give unto him. May our neighbour require a duty of us? The rule of our blessed Saviour is general, Mat. vii. 12, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye to them.' And a most absolute and rare example thereof we have in Job, in chap. xxxi., from ver. 16 to 22, whence it is most plain that what could be justly required of him by his neighbour, he was not a-wanting in it. Are we masters? What the servants may justly require of us, that we must think on and do; as it is written, Col. iv. 1, 'Ye masters, do unto your servants that which is just and equal,

* Ecclus. xix. 28.

knowing that ye have also a master in heaven.' Are we servants ? What our masters may justly require of us, that must we think on and do; as it is written, chap. iii. 22, ' Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, in all things, not with eye-servise as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God,' &c. Are we husbands ? What our wives may justly require of us, that must we think on and do ; as it is written, ver. 19, ' Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter unto them.' Are we wives ? What our husbands may justly require of us, that must we think on and do ; as it is written, ver. 18, ' Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as it is comely in the Lord.' Are we fathers ? Ver. 21, ' Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.' Are we children ? Ver. 20, ' Children, obey your parents in all things, for that is well-pleasing unto the Lord.' Which also tutors and scholars are to apply unto themselves. Do we owe anything unto any man ? Rom. xiii. 8, ' Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another.' Do we lend any money to any ? Exod. xxii. 25, ' If thou lend money to my people,' saith the Lord, ' that is, to the poor with thee, thou shalt not be as an usurer to him, ye shall not oppress him with usury.' Are we ecclesiastical men, or temporal men, or military men, or scholastical men, or public men, or private men ? Look what may be justly required of us by the laws of the church, or of the commonweal, or of arms, or of scholars, or of those cities and places where we dwell and live, that we are to think on, and to do. Generally, what men soever we be, what things soever may justly be required of us by the law of nature or of nations, by the law of God or of man, we are to think on them and to do them. And that for these reasons : first, because the things are just in themselves, for otherwise they cannot justly be required of us, but, being just in themselves, we are to think on them, and to do them. Secondly, because the things which may justly be required of us, do indeed make us debtors unto them that may require them of us. For, have we counsel, wisdom, learning, strength, &c. ? We are debtors unto them that need these things, and require them of us. And hereupon the apostle said, that he was ' debtor both to the Grecians and to the barbarians, both to the wise men and to the unwise,' Rom. i. 14 ; a debtor to bestow on them such spiritual gifts as he had received of the Lord. Thirdly, because the things which are justly required of us may be for their good that require them. For we are to do good unto all, as the apostle exhorteth, saying, Gal. vi. 10, ' Do good unto all, but especially unto them that are of the household of faith.' Being, then, that thereby we may do good, whatsoever things may justly be required of us, we are to think on them, and to do them.

This, then, should teach us, in any case, to beware of defrauding any of anything that is due unto him. ' Let no man,' saith the apostle, 1 Thes. iv. 6, ' op-

press or defraud his brother in any matter.' But do we not defraud the Lord ? defraud the prince ? defraud our neighbours and brethren ? Yes, surely. And wherein do we defraud them ? In that we give them not that which is due unto them ; in that we do not think on and do whatsoever things they may justly require of us. For who is he that walketh in that obedience which the Lord most justly requireth of him ? Our manifold rebellions against our God, and our wilful transgressions against his law, are too, too great evidence against us. I cannot speak of many things wherein we sin all against our God. Give me leave to warn you at this time of one. Ye know how earnestly the Lord requireth of us the sanctifying of the Sabbath, and how sharply he hath punished the breach of that commandment, even by death and desolation of kingdoms. Yet how much do we profane it, as throughout the whole year, so especially at this time of the year, by bringing in our May-poles, by having our ales, by that most disorderly trunk-playing, by rifling, by bowling, and divers other kinds of gaming ; by our ill customs of riding, going, drinking, dancing, and many the like offensive things on that day ? If we must needs have these things, some of which are heathenish, and the rest no way necessary and little better, yet let us spare the Lord his day, let us consecrate that day, and therein ourselves unto him. We have other sins too many, though we do not add this unto them of profaning the Lord his day. Let us remember what the Lord in this justly requireth of us, and let us not defraud him of this due. Again, how many villainous and traitorous wretches are there, which give not unto their prince that loyalty which she most justly requireth of them ? Those most bloody treasons which her most unnatural subjects have practised against her, besides many others plotted by those faithless and cruel monsters of Rome and Spain—from all which the Lord, by a most mighty hand, hath delivered her, and let us still pray unto our good God that he will still keep her safe under his wings and deliver her—those bloody treasons, I say, shew how many have defrauded her of that which is most due unto her. Come lower, and what end shall we make ! how imperious are masters over their servants, and how untrusty are servants toward their masters ! how bitter are the husbands sometimes towards their wives, and how undutiful are they again towards their husbands ! how cockering are parents of their children, and how stubborn are children towards their parents ! how negligent are tutors ! how dissolute are scholars ! how careless are they that owe, to repay that they owe ! and how ready are they that lend to grato upon them to whom they lend ! how many men in the ministry defraud their churches of that which is due unto them ! and how many of the rest defraud the commonwealth of that which is due unto it ! To speak all in one word, how few of all sorts think on and do that which might justly be

required of them ! Well, ye see the apostle would have us to think on and to do whatsoever things may justly be required of every one of us in our place. Let us, therefore, every one of us, consider ourselves in our place, and let us see what thing it is that may justly be required of us. Not one of us all but we shall find many things which the Lord our God, which our sovereign prince, which our neighbours and brethren, may justly require of us. Not one of us all, but we shall find many things which, by the law of nature, by the law of nations, by the law of God, by the law of man, may justly be required of us. Let us therefore, every one of us, think of these things, and let us, all of us in our place, do whatsoever may justly be required of us. Let our care be not to defraud any, God or man, prince or people, neighbour or brother, one or other, of that which is due unto him; but whatsoever things are just, let us think on them and do them. So shall we do that which we ought, and so shall the wrath of the Lord, which is kindled against us, be turned away from us : It followeth :—

Whatsoever things are pure. This is the fourth general head of that Christian duty which the apostle commandeth unto the Philippians, wherein he exhorteth them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are pure, that having their conversation honest, holy, and harmless, they might be blameless, innocent, and undefiled by any filthiness of sin. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that whatsoever things are pure and clean from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, we are to think on them and to do them. The Scribes and Pharisees thought on and observed an outward purity, and cleanness of the body ; for they would not eat till first they had washed their hands, Mark vii. 3 ; which outward cleanness of the body we do not mislike. But that is not the thing intended. For, as our blessed Saviour teacheth, Mat. xv. 20, ‘to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.’ Our adversaries imagine that they think well on this point, a great many of them, if they keep themselves single and unmarried, though then they burn and wallow in all filthy lusts and pleasures. But the Holy Ghost hath taught us, Heb. xiii. 4, that ‘marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled.’ And therefore he hath said unto all, without exception of any, 1 Cor. vii. 2, ‘To avoid fornication, let every man have his wife, and let every woman have her husband.’ That outward cleanness, then, of the body, in washing of the hands, and the like, nor this abstinence from marriage, are the pure things which we are to think on and to do, but far other things.

We are to be pure in heart, having our hearts purified by faith. For ‘by faith God purifieth our hearts,’ Acts xv. 9. We are to be pure in our consciences, ‘having our consciences purged from dead works to serve the living God,’ Heb. ix. 14. We are to be pure in our tongue and talk, that ‘our speech may be to the use of edifying, and may minister grace unto the hearers,’ Eph. iv. 29. We are to be pure in our

works and deeds, that ‘we may be blameless, and without rebuke,’ for anything that we do, Philip. ii. 15. We are to be pure in our bodies, that our bodies may be fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. For ‘know ye not,’ saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 19, ‘that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?’ To speak all in one word, we are to be pure in the whole man, both in our outer and in our inner man, being ‘cleansed from all filthiness both of the flesh and of the spirit, and growing up unto full holiness in the fear of God,’ 2 Cor. vii. 1. This is that purity which the Lord requireth at our hands, even to be pure in our flesh and in our spirit, in our soul and in our body, in our hearts and in our consciences, in our words and in our deeds, that so we may be blameless and without rebuke.

What then ? Am I come to teach you to be pure men and women ? Dare I take upon me to persuade you unto purity ? Yea, even so, beloved. As the prophet saith, Isa. i. 16, so say I unto you, ‘Wash you, make you clean.’ And as our apostle saith unto Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 22, so say I unto you, ‘Keep yourselves pure.’ And with our apostle here, ‘whatsoever things are pure, think on them and do them.’ Yea, but this is a thing that cannot be : ‘For none can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin,’ Prov. xxi. 9. True indeed, yet are we still to endeavour ourselves unto it, and to labour after it. We are to ‘desire the best gifts,’ 1 Cor. xii. 31 ; and we are to ‘fellow peace with all men, and holiness,’ Heb. xii. 14, though in this life we cannot come unto them and comprehend them. Otherwise that of our Saviour should be in vain, ‘Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,’ Mat. v. 46. This is a thing that cannot be, yet is it a thing that we must labour and strive unto, both by prayer, and every holy course. So, howsoever we cannot be pure, yet must we labour and strive unto it, both by prayer and every holy course, that we may be pure both in body and in soul, even in our whole man, until the coming of Christ Jesus.

This, then, should teach us to take heed and beware of whatsoever things may defile us in our bodies or in our souls. The time was when they defiled themselves that touched a dead corpse, or anything that was unclean. But all those things perished with the using. Now our blessed Saviour hath told us, Mat. xv. 19, what the things are that defile the man, and those are, ‘evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, slanders ;’ likewise covetousness, scurill jesting, corrupt communication, and the like. And therefore the Holy Ghost everywhere giveth out caveats against these things, admonishing always to take heed and beware of them. ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths,’ saith the apostle, Eph. iv. 29. And yet, how do many of us defile ourselves with filthy and unseemly talk ? It is a shameful thing unto chaste ears to hear what filthy ribaldries, what bawdy talking, what uncomely jesting, what lewd and wanton songs and sonnets are used in

many places both by men and women, old and young. They remember not that their tongues were given them wherewith to glorify the God of heaven ; but as if their tongues were their own, to speak therewith what they list, therewith they despite the Lord, offend their brethren, and defile themselves. Again, 'Fly fornication,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 18; 'every sin that a man doth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.' And yet how do men defile their bodies in all places with the filthiness of this sin ? 'Know we not, beloved, that our bodies are the members of Christ?' Or if we do, 'shall we take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot ? God forbid. Know we not that he which coupleteth himself with an harlot, is one body with her ?' And shall we join ourselves unto an harlot, and cut off ourselves from the body of Christ Jesus ? God forbid. Know we not that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost to dwell in ? And shall we, by following after strange flesh, drive the Holy Ghost out of the temples of our bodies ? God forbid. 1 Cor. iii. 17, 'If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' Now what do we else but destroy the temple of God, when we make our bodies a cage of unclean birds, and of all hateful lusts and pleasures ? It behoveth, therefore, every man to look into himself, how he suffereth himself to be defiled with this uncleanness, that he keep his body a pure virgin unto the Lord. Again, 'Let none of you,' saith the apostle, 1 Peter iv. 15, 'suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.' And yet by killing, and stealing, and robbing, and all manner of evil-doing, we break out, and as the prophet saith, Hos. iv. 2, 'Blood toundeth blood.' And, indeed, so little now-a-days do we thirst after purity in all our ways, that we had even as lief be counted impure as pure. Yea, now we have taken it up for a seotl and reproach unto them that make any conscience of their ways, that, forsooth, they are pure men, and they are pure women ; and if any such haply tread a little awry, then, These be the pure men, these be the pure women ! Thus, instead of hearkening unto the apostle's exhortation, we mock and reproach them that endeavour to keep themselves pure. Well, ye see that our apostle would have us to think on, and to do whatsoever things are pure. Let us hearken unto the apostle, and let us labour and strive unto it, both by prayer, and every holy course, to be pure in body and in soul, in word and in deed, and in our whole man. Let us abstain from whatsoever things may any way defile us : Eph. v. 3, 4, 'Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named amongst us, as becometh saints ; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are things not comely ; but rather giving of thanks.' Even whatsoever things are pure, let us think on them, and do them. It followeth :—

Whatsoever things pertain to love. This is the fifth

general head of that Christian duty which the apostle commendeth unto the Philippians, wherein he exhorteth them to think on, and to do whatsoever things are lovely, and may procure them love and favour with all men. For so I understand the apostle in this place. Whence I observo this lesson for us, that whatsoever things may win us love and favour amongst men, we are to think on them, and to do them. It is said of our blessed Saviour, Luke ii. 52, that 'he increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and men.' And it cannot but be commendable in us, so to carry ourselves, as that we grow in love and favour amongst men. What then ? Are we to communicate with the idolatrous in their superstitions, with the drunkards in their drunkenness, with the lascivious in their wantonness, with the idle in their idleness, with the unthrifts in their unthriftiness, with the factious in their factiousness, with the careless in their recklessness, with the carnal in their carnality, that we may win their love and favour ? The favour indeed of such is seldom won but so. But it is not so much the love and favour of them, as the love and favour of the good and godly that we are to seek. What then ? Are we to soothe and flatter them, to speak that we should not, that we may seek to please them ; to spare to speak that we should, lest we offend them ; to hazard a good conscience, for the pleasing of them ; or every way to labour to creep into their favour ? for thus sometimes even their favour is won. Nay, neither are we thus to seek after the favour of good men. But so we are to think on, and to do, whatsoever things may win us love and favour amongst men, as that the same things also may purchase us favour with God ; for otherwise, if they be not acceptable unto God, howsoever they might win us favour amongst men, we are not to think on them, nor to do them. What, then, are the things which may win us favour with God and men ? If we put on tender mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, patience, and temperance ; if we be true in word and deed, just in our dealings, helpful to the poor, honest in our conversation, if we honour the aged, seek not our own, but the wealth of others, &c., these are things, as pleasing unto God, so such as win the love and favour of all men, not only the good and godly, but also the wicked and ungodly. These things, therefore, we are to think on and to do. And so our apostle willetteth, where he saith, Col. iii. 12, 'Now therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercy,' &c.

This should teach us to avoid the things which may bring upon us the hatred and obloquy of men ; otherwise than the manner of some is, who purposely do some things, that thereby they may spite and grieve some men. It is not the hatred or displeasure of men that may withhold us from speaking, or doing that we ought. But if to spite or grieve some man, we stick not to speak or do that which may displease

our God, then our judgment sleepeth not. If we bring upon ourselves the hatred of men, and withhold the displeasure of God, the burden will be too heavy for us to bear. Let us therefore hearken unto the counsel of our apostle, and let us think on, and do, whatsoever things may win us love and favour with

men, so that withal they be pleasing unto God. Let us avoid whatsoever things may bring upon us the hatred or displeasure of men, specially such as are displeasing unto God. Let us love and live, so that we may be loved of God and man; even whatsoever things are lovely, let us think on them, and do them.

LECTURE LXXXV.

Whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things, and do these things, which ye have both learned and received, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 8, 9.

THERE is yet remaining another general head of Christian piety, which the apostle commendeth unto the Philippians, wherein he exhorteth them to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are of good report amongst men, that by such things they may win unto themselves a good name, and be well spoken and reported of in the places where they live. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that whatsoever things may purchase us a good report, or continue our good name amongst the sons of men, we are to think on them, and to do them, that as much as is possible we may hear well of all men. ‘A good name,’ saith Solomon, Prov. xv. 30, ‘maketh the bones fat;’ that is, so comforteth, and rejoiceth, and strengtheneth a man, as good fare which maketh him fat and well liking. Yea, ‘a good name,’ saith the same Solomon, chap. xxii. 1, ‘is to be chosen above great riches;’ yea, Eccles. vii. 3, ‘a good name is better than a good ointment.’ A good life, saith the son of Sirach,* hath the days numbered, but a good name endureth for ever; it continueth with thee above a thousand treasures of gold. And therefore it is that men are oftentimes as jealous of their good name and good report among men as of their lives, and count themselves (after a sort) killed, when their good name is impaired or called into question. To have, then, a good name, ye see, and to be well reported of, is as much worth as gold, nay, as a thousand treasures of gold; nay, as much worth as a man’s life. Therefore the apostle exhorteth, Rom. xii. 17, to ‘procure things honest before all men;’ things honest, that is, things which may purchase us credit, and make us to be well reported of amongst men; and our apostle in this place to think on, and to do, whatsoever things are of good report. Now, then, what are the things that make us well reported of amongst men? Surely, if it be said of us that we are men dealing faithfully, truly, justly, and uprightly; living honestly, soberly, purely, and godly; walking wisely, modestly, peaceably, and lovingly with our brethren, bearing things patiently, as becometh the saints of God; in a word, having faith and a good conscience, and whatsoever things pertain to virtue: if we be such men, these things will make us well reported of, and either bring us to a good name, if we had it not, or continue our

good name, if we have it. For these are things of good report, both before the Lord, and also before men.

Yea, but this is great vanity, to seek after fame and good report among men, that men may speak well and report well of us. It is so indeed, if therein we seek our own glory. For how good soever, how full of rare virtues soever the things be that we do, if therein we seek our own glory, it is surely great vanity. We must therefore know that we are to think on, and to do the things that are of good report both before the Lord and also before men, not for our own glory, but for the glory of Christ Jesus, in whom we believe, for the glory of the gospel of Christ Jesus, which we profess. We must have care that we may be well spoken of, well reported of, not for any tickling vanity of our own praises, but that the name of God, that the truth of Christ Jesus, might be well spoken of for our sakes. For it is an ornament and honour unto the truth with men, if the professors of the truth be of good report amongst men. And therefore our blessed Saviour saith, Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ And our apostle, describing the office of a minister, saith, 1 Tim. iii. 7, that ‘he must be well reported of, even of them that are without, lest he fall into rebuke;’ indeed, that the word of God be not evil spoken of. And the apostle Peter, prescribing unto wives how they ought to order themselves towards their husbands, saith, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2, that they are to be ‘subject unto them;’ and why? ‘That even they which obey not the word, may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold their pure conversation which is with fear.’ And to the same purpose he giveth this general exhortation, chap. ii. 12, ‘Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you as of evil doers, may by your good works which they shall see, glorify God in the day of visitation.’ To the end, therefore, that God may be glorified, and that the truth which we profess may be well spoken of, we are to think on and to do whatsoever things are of good report, whereby we may win or continue a good name and report amongst men.

This, then, should teach us to take heed and be-

* Eccl. xli. 13.

ware of whatsoever things may bring an evil report upon us; and the rather, for that the hurt thereof lights not upon ourselves alone, but upon the name of our God whereby we are called, and upon the truth of our God which we profess. What ill reports Eli his sons heard touching the offerings of the Lord we all know, as also how therefore 'men abhorred the offerings of the Lord,' 1 Sam. ii. 17. Their sin which they committed was very great, and brought a very ill report upon them; but hereby it is aggravated, that it brought a dishonour upon the holy name of God, and the offerings of the Lord. And so must we reckon, that whatsoever ill report we bring upon ourselves by any evil that we do, it lights not on ourselves alone, but upon our God, in whom we believe, and upon his truth which we profess. And yet how careless are we of such things as bring ill reports upon us. Factions, divisions, and contentions, what ill reports do they bring upon us, and upon the truth which we profess. And yet how is the corn overgrown everywhere by these weeds and tares! Every one of us will post the name off from one to another. The Brownists and Barrowists, they make no division in the church; the ringleaders of factions, they make no factions in societies; the firebrands of contention, they make no contention among neighbours and brethren, but such, and such, and such. But yet the thing remaineth to our great infamy; faction, division, and contention, they grow up to our shame. Again, usury, I think, will be confessed to be a thing of evil report. I am sure the Lord hath forbidden it, Levit. xxv. 36, even all usury or vantage, call it biting usury, or what else you will; and that the prophet Jeremiah so loathed it, Jer. xv. 10, that he washed his hands clean of either lending or borrowing upon usury; that Nehemiah swept it out from among the people as a great filthiness, Nehem. v.; and that Ezekiel condemneth giving upon usury, or taking increase, by what name soever you will call it, Ezek. xviii. 13. And yet how many professors of the truth hear evil for this sin; and how ill doth the truth itself hear for this sin! I assure myself that the adversaries of the truth offend a hundredfold more this way than do the professors of the truth; but, being a thing of evil report, I could wish that the professors of the truth would, with Jeremiah, wash their hands of this sin. I should instance in many other things of evil report; but by these you will conjecture what is to be said of the rest: for generally this I say, whatsoever the thing be, if it be of evil report, we are not to think on it, nor to do it, lest not only we, but the truth of Christ Jesus, hear evil for our sakes.

Yea, but what if an evil report be brought upon us without a cause? What if we be counted schismatical, factious, contentious, usurers, or the like, without a cause? Without a cause? Then no matter. If there be a cause of such report, then we are to look unto it; but if not, we need not to be moved much at the

matter. Nay, our Saviour tells us, Mat. v. 11, 12, that we are blessed when men speak all manner of evil against us for his sake falsely, and that we are to rejoice and be glad. In these cases we are to pass, with the apostle, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, 2 Cor. vi. 8. We cannot stay men from reporting ill of us. Our blessed Saviour himself heard it said of himself that he was 'a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners,' Luke vii. 34. What marvel if the world speak evil of us, and, like the dragon, cast out whole floods of evil reports upon us. But this we are to look unto, that neither we think on nor do anything that may bring an evil report upon us justly. For we hear what our apostle saith; whatsoever things are of good report, we are to think on them and to do them; but whatsoever things are of evil report, we are not to think on them nor to do them. Let us therefore carefully look unto the things whereon we set our hearts, or whereunto we set our hands. Is it a thing of good report, which may make us well spoken of amongst men? Let us then think on it, and do it, that so the truth which we profess may be well spoken of. But is it a thing of evil report, which may make us ill spoken of? Let even this be enough to dissuade us from thinking on it, or doing it, whatsoever it be, lest the way of truth be evil spoken of. By things of good report, our God and his truth, and ourselves, shall have honour; but by things of evil report, our God and his truth, and ourselves, shall be dishonoured. Let us therefore think on and do whatsoever things may bring on us a good report, and avoid both the thought and the deed of whatsoever may bring an ill report upon us.

The last thing which I note in this general conclusion of the apostle's exhortations, or rather in the exhortation, is, that the apostle would have the Philippians to think on these things, and to do these things; for these two, howsoever they be severed in place by our apostle, yet are they to be joined in the opening of these words, and in following of the apostle's exhortation. He would therefore have the Philippians to think on these things; that is, to enter into a diligent consideration of these things with themselves, and in their hearts to love and affect them, and likewise to do these things, because it would be to no great purpose that in their hearts they should love and affect these things, and enter into a serious consideration of them, unless also they should practise them in their lives. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that unto the performance of Christian piety and holy duty, it is not enough to think on seriously with ourselves, and in our hearts to love and affect whatsoever things are true, &c., unless also in our outward actions we follow whatsoever things are true, &c. Both in our hearts we must think on, and love, and affect the things that are good; and in the words of our mouth, in the works of our hands, and in the ways of our lives, we must

shew forth the same. Heart and hand must go together. If the heart indite a good matter, the tongue must be the pen of a ready writer; if the heart believe unto righteousness, the tongue must confess unto salvation; and if the knowledge of such things as accompany salvation be in the understanding, there must also be an holy practice of such things in the life and conversation; and therefore David prayed, Ps. xix. 14, that both the meditations of his heart and the words of his mouth might be acceptable in the sight of the Lord; no doubt that both in his heart he might think on, and with his mouth might speak, and in his life might practise, those things which were good and right in his eyes. And in another place, Ps. cxix., he professeth not only that he loveth the law of the Lord, and meditateth thereon continually, but also that he keepeth his commandments with his whole heart. For, as our blessed Saviour saith, Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of the Father which is in heaven'; and, as the apostle saith, Rom. ii. 13, 'Not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified;' so is it likewise in this whereof we now speak, that not every one that thinketh on, or loveth and affecteth the things that are good, by and by performeth the holy duties of Christian piety, but he that sheweth forth his love in the holy practice of a Christian life and conversation. Nay, indeed, whatsoever profession we make, and howsoever we say that we think on, and love and affect the best things, yet unless the fruit thereof shew itself in our outward actions, in our lives and conversations, in vain do we persuade ourselves of Christian piety in ourselves; for where the Spirit worketh in the heart a serious cogitation, a true love and affection unto whatsoever things are good, there also, by the power and work of the same Spirit, the fruit of these things is seen in the practice of a holy life and conversation; so that as we think on, and love, and affect the things that are good, so we will be ready also to do and to practise that which is good.

Let this, then, teach us to take heed how we flatter ourselves with a vain persuasion of Christian piety and performance of holy duty, when indeed we are far from it. Thou wilt say unto me, that thou thinkest on the things that are true, and holy, and just, &c., as much as any man doth; but thou must say it and prove it, or else howsoever thou persuadest thyself of thy performance of a good Christian duty, in that thou thinkest on, and lovest, and affectest the things that are good, yet thou deceivest thyself. For say that thine heart is set on, and that thou hast a very good mind unto whatsoever things are true, thou must also prove it by doing whatsoever things are true, by embracing a truth in religion, by speaking the truth with thy mouth, and by being that in truth which thou wouldest seem unto the world to be,

or else thou deceivest thyself. Say that thou lovest and affectest whatsoever things are honest; thou must also make proof of it by doing whatsoever becometh thy person in thy place, with all decent gravity, or else thou deceivest thyself. Say that thine heart is set on whatsoever things are just; thou must make proof of it by doing whatsoever things may be justly required of thee by God or man, or else thou deceivest thyself. Say that thine heart is set on whatsoever things are pure; thou must also make proof of it by abstaining from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, or else thou deceivest thyself. Say that thine heart is set on whatsoever things are lovely; thou must also make proof of it, by doing whatsoever may win thee love and favour with God and men, or else thou deceivest thyself. Say that thine heart is set on whatsoever things are of good report; thou must also make proof of it by doing whatsoever may make thee well reported of, and the truth for thy sake, or else thou deceivest thyself. Say that thine heart is set on whatsoever things are good and commendable; thou must also make proof of it by doing whatsoever things are good and commendable, and abstaining from the contrary, or else thou deceivest thyself. And therefore certainly a great many of us do deceive ourselves. For by our outward actions it appeareth how far otherwise we do than we should, lying one unto another, doing things not seemly, defrauding others of that is due unto them, defiling our own selves, grieving one another, bringing upon ourselves evil reports, and following after that which is evil and blameworthy. We would, it may be, serve God, but we do serve mammon; we would, it may be, seem religious, but we are covetous; we cry, it may be, in our hearts, and with our mouths, Lord, Lord, but we do not the will of the Lord; we would sit, it may be, at the right hand and left hand of Jesus in his kingdom, but we cannot away with it to drink of his cup. In a word, we would make a show of godliness, but we deny the power thereof; we would seem to profess Jesus Christ, but we do turn the grace of God into wantonness. Thus we deceive ourselves, while we do not both think on, and do the things that are good, and such as accompany salvation. Let us therefore, as many as fear the Lord, and desire to walk in his ways, hearken unto our apostle, and both think on and do whatsoever things are true, &c. He that hath made all, and is only worthy of all, let him have all; heart and hand, thought and deed, word and work, let all be employed in his service, let all be always bent upon whatsoever things are true, &c., that still we think on them and do them.

Which ye have both learned, &c. This is the former reason which the apostle useth to enforce his exhortation unto the Philippians, and it is drawn, as ye see, from the things whereto he exhorteth them, which were no new things, such as they had not known or heard of, but 'which they had both learned, and

received, and heard, and seen' in him. Where I note, that the things whercunto he exhorteth them were such as they had both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, and therefore such as both he might the better urge, and they should the rather follow. Whence first I observe this lesson for the minister and teacher of the word, that if he will do good with his people, and prevail with them unto every holy course, he must both teach them with the word of truth, and with example of life, that both they may hear and learn the truth from his mouth, and likewise see the same expressed in his life. And therefore our apostle exhorteth Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 12, to 'be an example unto them that believe, in word and in conversation: in word, that from his mouth they might be instructed in the wholesome word of truth; and in conversation, that in his life they might see that integrity which becometh saints. So likewise he exhorteth Titus, chap. ii. 7, 8, 'above all things to shew himself an example of good works: with uncorrupt doctrine, with gravity, integrity, and with the wholesome word that cannot be reproved.' So that he would have him both to teach the truth soundly and sincerely, and in his life to carry himself with all gravity and integrity, to be a pattern of good works and holiness of life. And so the apostle Peter, 1 Peter v. 2, 3, exhorteth all ministers to 'feed the flock of God which dependeth on them, and to be examples to the flock;' to feed them with the bread of God, the wholesome word of truth, and to be examples unto them in all holiness of life. Otherwise, whatsoever they build with the one hand, they pull down with the other; and like unto the naughty cow, turn down with their foot all the milk that they have yielded. For preach they never so well, labour they never so painfully, be they never so eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, if their life be offensive, their teaching will be unprofitable. Nay, if their people can once say unto them,—'Physician, heal thyself,' Luke iv. 23. 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?' Rom. ii. 21, 22—let them never look to prevail with them for anything that is good. Oh but the people should regard what their teachers say, not what they do. True, indeed, for so our Saviour hath said. But the teachers should be careful, as of that they say, so of that they do, to lead their people in and out, both in soundness of doctrine and in holiness of life. For as a woe is unto them if any perish for want of feeding, so likewise if any perish by their ill and naughty example of living.

Let them, then, look unto this, that neither attend unto doctrine, nor give good example of life unto others; and they also that attend unto doctrine, but do more harm by their example of life than they do good by their teaching; and they also that having care that their life be not offensive, either do not, or cannot

teach their people the things that belong unto their peace. The good minister of Christ should be able at all times to press his people unto the things which they had learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him. He that faileth in either, doctrine or life, hath his woe; how much more he that faileth in both!

Secondly, Hence I observe this lesson for you that are hearers of the word, that whatsoever good things ye have learned, received, heard, and seen in your ministers and teachers, those things ye should think on and do. For is there a necessity laid upon us to preach the gospel unto you, and is there not a necessity laid upon you to hear the word of your salvation from our mouths? Is there a woe unto us if we preach not the gospel unto you, and is there not a woe unto you if ye hear not the gospel of us? Lieth there a charge upon us to be examples unto you of holiness of life, and integrity of conversation; and lieth there not a charge upon you to be followers of us in all holiness of life and integrity of conversation? Yes, beloved; if we be to bring the gospel of our salvation unto you, ye are to receive it of us; if we be to shew you all the counsel of God, ye are to hear it of us; if we be to go before you in a sanctified life, ye are to follow us, and so to walk as ye have us for an example. And therefore saith the apostle unto the Hebrews, chap. xiii. 8, 'Remember them which have the oversight of you, which have declared unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering what hath been the end of their conversation.' And our apostle in the chapter before, 'Be ye followers,' saith he, 'of me, and look on them which walk so, as ye have us for an example.' Which of us would not contemn that child that should not hearken to the good counsel of his father? or that subject that should contemn his prince's ambassador? Beloved, we are your fathers in Christ Jesus, to beget you, by the immortal seed of the word, unto a lively faith and hope in Christ Jesus. How ought ye then, as dear children, to hearken unto your fathers' instruction, and so to walk as ye have us for an example. We are the ambassadors of the King of kings and Lord of lords, even of Christ Jesus, sent unto you in his stead, to declare unto you the will of our heavenly Father, and to beseech you to be reconciled unto God. How ought we, then, to be received of you, and how ought our message to be entertained?

But do ye hearken unto us as unto your fathers in Christ Jesus? Do ye receive us as the ambassadors of Christ Jesus? Is our message entertained as sent from Christ Jesus? I bear you record, some of you, that you receive our message, and hearken unto us gladly. But if all of you say that ye do so, then must I say unto you as Samuel said unto Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 14, when Saul told him that he had fulfilled the commandments, 'What, then,' saith he, 'meaneth the bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I bear?' So say I unto you, What

meaneth, then, the gunning and drumming in mine ears? what meaneth the lording and ladyng which I hear? If we come unto you, and speak unto you in our own name, hear us not; but if we come unto you, and speak nnto you in the name of the Lord, will ye not hear us? If ye will not, it is not us, but it is the Lord that ye refuse to hearken to and obey, as it is written, Luke x. 16, 'He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me,' saith the Lord. We only, as the Lord his watchmen, warn you of the wickedness of your ways; we only, as the ambassadors of Christ Jesus, pray ye that ye be reconciled unto God. If ye hearken not, sin lieth at

the door, indigation and wrath is unto them that disobey the truth. Beloved, it is not yours, but you, that we seek. It is not out of the humour of one that can abide no pastime that we speak unto you, but out of the desire of one that would have you blameless and pure, and the sons of God without rebuke. In Christ's stead, therefore, I beseech you to leave off these disordered sportings and meetings. The custom of them is heathenish, the abuses of them great, and the inconveniences which follow them many. Thus ye have learned, and received, and heard, and therefore think not on them, nor do them.

LECTURE LXXXVI.

And the God of peace shall be with you. Now I rejoice also in the Lord greatly, that now at the last ye are revived again to care, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 9, 10.

THE latter reason which the apostle useth to enforce his exhortation remaineth now to be spoken of, which is a promise that the God of peace shall be with them, if they will think on these things, and do them. The thing, then, that, upon hearkening unto his exhortation, is promised, is, the presence of the only wise and ever living God, sometimes called 'the God of glory,' in whom only is the fulness of glory, and unto whom all glory is due; sometimes 'the God of love,' in whom only is true and perfect love, and who alone is for himself to be loved; sometimes 'the God of comfort and consolation,' in whom, and by whom alone, we have true comfort unto our souls; sometimes 'our Peace,' which of Jews and Gentiles hath made one body, and broken down the partition wall which was between us and them; sometimes 'the King of peace,' under the covert of whose wings we live in peace; and sometimes 'the God of peace,' as both here and often elsewhere. Now he is called the God of peace, both because of our reconciliation which he hath wrought by Jesus Christ; for so it is said, 2 Cor. v. 18, that 'he hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ,' and because of that peace of conscience which he communicateth unto us through our reconciliation with him by Jesus Christ; for so it is said, Rom. v. 1, that 'being justified by faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' and likewise because of that outward peace which he giveth us in the world, so far forth as is for his glory and our good. When, then, the apostle saith that the God of peace shall be with them, the fruit of God's presence with them is thereby signified, in that he is called the God of peace. For hereupon thus I understand this promise, that if they think on and do these things which he hath commended unto them, then the God of peace shall be with them, to reconcile them unto himself, to give them peace of conscience through their reconciliation with him, and

to bless them with outward peace in the world, so far forth as shall be for his glory and their good, so that the fruit of their innocence and piety shall be peace, inward and outward, with God, in their souls and in the world.

Where, first, in that the apostle, the rather to enforce his exhortation, annexeth this merciful promise, that in so doing the God of peace shall be with them, I observe the great mercy of our God towards us, who, to win us to the performance of such Christian duties as we owe unto him and to our brethren, doth, both in his own person and in his ministers, draw us thereunto by most sweet and loving promises. If we look into the work of our creation at the beginning, we shall find that we were created, formed, and made for the glory of God, Isa. xlivi. 7, that we might glorify him by doing his will and walking in his ways. If we look into the work of our re-creation by Jesus Christ, we shall find that we are 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them,' Ephes. ii. 10. If we look into the written law of God, we shall find that whatsoever things are true, &c., we ought to think on them, and to do them. So that by the law of our creation, by the law of our re-creation, by the holy law of God, we are to do whatsoever Christian duty may justly be required of us by God or man; and when we have done all that we can in any of these things, we have done no more but that which was our duty to do, Luke xvii. 10, even that which, as we are God's workmanship, we are bound to do. And yet such is the mercy of our God, as that, to bring us nnto such Christian duties as we are bound to perform, he makes many large and great promises, both by himself and by his ministers. In Deuteronomy xxviii. 1-15, 'If thou shalt obey,' saith the Lord by Moses, 'the voice of the Lord thy God, and obsevre and do all his commandments which I

command thee this day, then the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee,' &c. To hearken unto the voice of their God, and to obey his will, were things wherennto they were bound, and which they were, upon their allegiance, to do. Yet behold by how many and great promises of blessings he inviteth them thereunto. In our apostle, likewise, Rom. ii. 7, 'To them that by continuance in well-doing seek glory, and honour, and immortality, God shall reward eternal life.' To continue in well-doing is a duty whereunto we are bound; for so it is written, Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' Yet behold, to provoke us hereunto, a promise of eternal life. Quite otherwise, then, it is with us; for which of us, to draw our servants to the performance of such duties as by their places they are to do, allure them by promises? Nay, we require of them that which is their duty to do, and look for it at their hands. But promises, they are for children. But as in other things, so is it in this, God is not as man. He hath given us a law to keep, and prescribed us duties to observe, which we, his servants, are to keep and observe, and the performance whereof he may absolutely require of us. Yet doth he not so; but by many promises of great rewards he provoketh us unto whatsoever he requireth of us, as might be proved by infinite testimonies out of the holy Scriptures.

This should serve to stir up our dull minds, and to make us follow hard toward whatsoever holy duties, towards God or towards man, are required of us. That we must be allured by promises argues our dull minds, and unwilling to the things that are good, unless we be even drawn unto them by promise of reward. But in that we are allured by promises, let this stir us up to follow after such holy duties as have such promises of reward from the Lord. If the world do promise honour, there needs not any to spur the ambitions forward; so is it with the sensual man, if the flesh do promise pleasures; and so is it with the covetous, if the blowing of any wind do promise riches; they make haste, and post apace after these things, and strive who should be the foremost. Shall the promises of the world, of the flesh, or of any like thing, so stir up the ambitious, sensual, and covetous worldlings to run after their vanities, and shall not the promises of the Lord stir up his children to follow after such things as have such promises of reward from him? Shall the words of wind and worse so prevail with them to run after, I say not after a corruptible crown, but after worse than vanity; and shall not the word of the Lord prevail with his children to run after such holy duties as bring with them an incorruptible crown? It is a shame that the children of darkness should thus overgo the children of light in their generation. Let not the vain promises

of the world prevail more with them, to draw them unto worldly vanity, than the sure promises of the Lord with us to draw us unto Christian piety. Let us not despise the mercy of the Lord, but, as dutiful children, let us follow after that wherunto, by loving promises, he doth so provoke us, as parents are wont to do their children. If he only required it, we were to do it. How ought we, then, to bestir ourselves, when he promiseth great blessings for doing that we should? Let us, then, hearken when he promiseth, and surely wait for what he promiseth.

Secondly, From the thing promised, in that it is said that the God of peace shall be with them, to give them peace outward and inward, with God, in their souls, and in the world, if they will think on and do those things wherunto he exhorteth them, I observe what the fruit of innocence, piety, and holy walking with God and men is; the God of peace shall be with such as so walk, to give them his peace. 'Be perfect,' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 11, 'be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.' In which words the apostle in few words compriseth the sum of that Christian piety and duty which he requireth of the Corinthians, and withholdeth that this fruit shall follow upon the performance thereof, the God of love and peace shall be with them, that his love being shed abroad in their hearts by the power of the Spirit, they may be fulfilled with that peace which passeth all understanding. Will we, then, have the Lord to be present with us by his grace? Will we have the God of peace to be with us to give us his peace? Then must we 'live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world,' and 'whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, &c., we must think on them, and do them.' For so the God of peace shall be with us, if we walk with God, and with men as we ought, thinking on and doing such things as are good, and accompany salvation.

Where withhold we must know that this fruit of God's presence, this blessing of peace by the God of peace, followeth not upon the merit and worth of any performance of any Christian piety or duty which we can think on or do; for, could we do more by much than we are able to do, yet shouldest we do but that only which is our duty to do, as before I told you. And where nothing but duty is performed, what merit is there for the performance? Nay, whatsoever good we do, or possibly can do, it is so polluted by the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, wherewithal we are defiled, that if it be weighed, it will be found too light in itself to deserve any good at the Lord's hand. Not one straight line that we draw, but all our paths are crooked, and 'all our righteousness is as filthy rags,' Isa. lxiv. 6, so that no merit, but of death, which is the due reward of sin, Rom. vi. 23. How, then, is it that this fruit of God's presence, this blessing of peace by the God of peace, followeth our performance of

Christian piety? It is not of merit, but according unto promise. For as in this place ye see, he hath promised such fruit to follow such holy walking. He, then, which hath promised, being not as man that he should lie, or as the son of man that he should repent, but being faithful in his promise, giveth such grace where there wanteth merit, even because he hath promised. And if we keep the condition, the promise shall surely be fulfilled; if we think on and do these things which we have heard and learned, then the God of peace shall surely be with us, because he hath so promised. Do I say, if we keep the condition, if we think on and do these things which we have heard and learned? Yea, I say so; but here see the mercy of God. He imposeth a condition upon us, he requires a duty of us, to think on and do these things. And what, is it in us to keep the condition? Is it in us to think on and do these things? Nay, our apostle plainly telleth us, 2 Cor. iii. 5, that 'we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything that is good, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' Ill enough we can think of ourselves; for in ourselves 'all the imaginations of the thoughts of our hearts are only evil continually,' Gen. vi. 5, but we cannot think anything that is good as of ourselves. What, not *think*? How then can we *do* the thing that is good? Our apostle tells us, Philip. ii. 13, that 'it is God that works in us both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure,' so that if we desire anything that is good, or do anything that is good, it is God that works in us, both the good desire and the good deed. To the point, then; the Lord imposeth a condition upon us, and he alone enableth us to the performance of the condition; he requireth of us to think on, and to do, those things which are true, honest, just, &c., and he alone suggesteth unto us both the thinking on, and the doing of these things; and he saith unto us, If ye walk in my laws, &c., and he alone maketh us to walk in his laws, and worketh in us whatsoever thing is good; so that when the Lord maketh good his promises unto us, and crowneth us with rich grace according to his promise, he only crowneth and graceth his own works which he hath wrought in us. Thus, then, ye see that so the God of peace shall be with us, if we think on, and do whatsoever things are true, &c.; not that either the merit of our Christian and holy walking procureth that promise of the Lord, or that it is in us to perform the condition, that so we may receive the promise, but it is the Lord that worketh in us, both to think on and to do these things, and that bindeth himself by promise to be with us, if we think on and do these things; and therefore, if we think on and do these things, he will be with us, because he hath promised.

Hence, then, let us learn what shall be unto them that do not think on, nor do whatsoever things are true, &c., even whatsoever things they have learned, and received, and seen in their ministers and teachers,

namely, this, the God of peace shall not be with them. 'There is no peace,' saith the Lord, Isa. xlvi. 22, 'to the wicked.' And again, 'The wicked,' saith the prophet, Ps. ix. 17, 'shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God.' Now, who forget God, if not they that do not think on and do the things that they have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in God's ministers? Nay, it cannot be that the God of peace should be with them that so neglect the things that belong to their peace. For them that honour him he will honour, 1 Sam. ii. 30, and they that despise him shall be despised. Join light and darkness, Christ and Belial, and then let the God of peace be with them that neglect the things that belong unto their peace. And yet how many are there that will not come to learn, and receive, and hear of us the things that belong unto their peace! How many that never think on or do the things that they have learned, and received, and heard of us, the things that are true, honest, &c.! The absence of some (for the most part) from these our holy meetings, and the dissolute negligence of others, which being present are as if they were absent, give too, too plain testimony to the truth of that I say. Oh, would we have the God of peace to be with us? Who is so desperately wicked that would not? Here we see how we may have the God of peace to be with us, namely, if we think on and do those things which we have learned, and received, and heard of our teachers in Christ Jesus. But if either we shall oppose ourselves unto those things, as some do; or neglect to think on and do those things, as too many do; or absent ourselves from the hearing, and learning, and receiving of those things, as others do; how shall the God of peace be with us? Nay, he shall set himself against us, and instead of peace with him and in our own souls, he shall arm himself against us, and send trouble into our souls. Let us, therefore, think on and do whatsoever things are true, &c., even whatsoever good things we have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in our ministers and teachers; and let us take heed how either we oppose ourselves unto them, or neglect to think on and do them, or absent ourselves from the hearing of them. If we do, the God of peace shall be with us, to give us his peace; but if not, he will set himself against us, and howsoever for a time we sleep securely, yet shall he make us at war against ourselves. Thus far of this exhortation, and the reasons hereof.

Now rejoice I also, &c. After those sundry exhortations unto the Philippians in the former part of this chapter, whereof hitherto we have spoken, now followeth the latter part of the chapter, wherein he giveth thanks unto the Philippians for that bountiful liberality which they sent unto him lying at Rome in prison, by the hands of Epaphroditus their minister, therewith to supply such things as he lacked. First, therefore, he signifieth his rejoicing for their great care for him, shewed by the things which they sent

him by their minister, ver. 10. Secondly, he signifieth his rejoicing to be, not so much for the gift they sent him, as for the fruit which thence redounded unto them, from ver. 11 to 18. Thirdly, he commendeth their liberality, and wisheth the recompence thereof into their bosom, ver. 18, 19. These be the general points. First, then, he signifieth, I say, his rejoicing for their great care for him, when he saith, 'Now rejoice I,' &c. In that he saith, 'I rejoice greatly,' he signifieth the greatness of his rejoicing, that he was almost ravished with joy for their care for him. In that he saith, 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord,' he signifieth that his joy was not carnal, or conceived upon the greatness of the gift, but that the Lord by his Spirit had enlarged their hearts, and wrought in them such a Christian care. In that he saith, that 'now at the last they were revived again to care for him,' he implieth that their care had for some time slackened towards him. The word here used is borrowed from trees, which seeming in winter to be dead and withered, in the spring grow green again, and hath in it this similitude, that as the trees which in winter seemed to be withered, flourish again in the spring, so their care, which for a time languished and decayed, now again revived. In that lastly he saith, that they 'had been careful,' &c., he excuseth the slackness of their care for him, as not proceeding from want of will, but from want of opportunity to send that which they desired. In these words, then, I note these three branches: first, the apostle's rejoicing for their care for him; secondly, the Philippians' slackness for some time to care for him; thirdly, the apostle's excuse of their slackness to care for him. This is the meaning of these words, and these be the branches therein contained. Now, let us see what observations we may gather hence, whereof to make some use for ourselves.

First, then, here I note the apostle's great thankfulness unto the Philippians for their great care of him, whereof he giveth them to wit, when he saith, that he rejoiceth greatly for their care for him. Whence I observe this lesson for all Christians, that it becometh them to be thankful for benefits received, and to shew forth their thankfulness in word and in deed unto those of whom they have received them. I speak not of thankfulness unto God, but of thankfulness unto men, so beseeching all men, as that otherwise, almost they forget to be men. When Ephron the Hittite would have given unto Abraham his field in Machpelah, to bury his dead there, how did Abraham bow unto him, Gen. xxiii. 12, and thank him! When Boaz gave leave unto Ruth to glean in the field, how thankful unto him were both Naomi and Ruth, chap. ii. To omit others, our apostle, what thanks giveth he unto Priscilla and Aquila, for their constant cleaving unto him! Rom. xvi. 4. How thankfully doth he remember the Galatians' sometimes exceeding great love and kindness towards him! Gal. iv. 15. And

how thankfully doth he remember Philemon's love towards all saints! ver. 5. Generally that of the prophet, Ps. xxxiii. 1, is true even in this, that 'it becometh well the just to be thankful,' as unto the Lord for his mercies, so unto man for such benefits as they have received of man. For thus both he that receiveth, shall do that which might be expected; and he that giveth, shall have that wherewith he will be satisfied.

Let this, then, teach us to beware of unthankfulness. 'He that rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house,' Prov. xvii. 13. And what else doth he that repays good turns with unthankfulness? Let unkind Laban be unthankful unto Jacob if he will, and churlish Nabal unto David, but let it be far from the faithful to be unthankful. Our apostle sorts unthankful men with the worst men that be, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, as 'self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, cursed speakers, men disobedient to parents, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers,' &c. And yet how many are there that would be loath to be reckoned among the worst, which are as unthankful as the most! Whose fault soever it be, it is a foul fault, and one that includes all. Let us beware of it, and let our thankful mind be known to all that any way deserve well of us.

Secondly, In that the apostle saith, that he rejoiced in the Lord greatly for their care for him, I note that the apostle's rejoicing was not so much for the bountifulness of their gift, but especially for that the Lord by his Spirit had enlarged their hearts to a Christian care over him. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that when any do relieve us, being in prison, poverty, need, sickness, or any other adversity, we are not so much to rejoice in the gift by which we are relieved, but especially we ought to rejoice in the Lord for that he hath vouchsafed to touch their hearts with a godly feeling of our wants, and a Christian care to supply our wants. Thankfulness unto them is beseeching and requisite, as before we heard, but our special care should be to lift up our eyes unto the Lord, and to rejoice in him. For he it is that openeth the bowels of compassion, and toucheth with a tender commiseration of their poor and needy, distressed brethren, the hearts of them that are enriched with greater sufficiency; and therefore our apostle, in many of his epistles, usually thanketh God, as for their faith in Christ Jesus, so for their love towards all saints: 'We give thanks to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' saith the apostle in the next epistle, Col. i. 3, 4, 'since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love towards all saints.' And he tells the Corinthians, 2 Cor. ix. 11, that their 'liberality causeth thanksgiving unto God,' God being therefore to be blessed, because he openeth the saints' hearts to relieve the necessities of the poor saints.

First, therefore, let me beseech you, beloved, even in the bowels of Christ Jesus, to give your poor and distressed brethren cause to rejoice in the Lord greatly

for your care over them. A godly and Christian care of late hath been taken by the whole states of the land assembled in parliament for the provision of the poor, and we are all of us to rejoice in the Lord greatly for it, that he put into their mind such an holy care. Put ye now on tender mercy and compassion, and let your care likewise be shewed this way, by a cheerful giving towards the relief of your poor brethren so much as shall be thought meet for you, that the backs and bellies of your poor brethren may bless you, and rejoice in the Lord for you. If ye shall find in yourselves a willing cheerfulness this way, know that it is the Lord that hath opened your hearts, and stirred up the bowels of compassion within you ; and look whatsoever he gives, the Lord shall recompense it into his bosom. For so it is written, Prov. xix. 17, ‘ He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will recompense him that which he hath given.’ But if ye shall grudge to set forward so good a work, and think every little too much that is required of you to that purpose, know that the Lord hath yet hardened your hearts, and shut up all bowels of compassion within you ; and as now the poor cry, and ye hear not, so the day shall come, wherein ye shall cry, and not be heard. For so it is written, chap. xxi. 18, ‘ He that stoppeth his ears at the crying of the poor, he shall also cry, and not be heard.’ As every man, therefore, hath received, so let him give, and that cheerfully, ‘ for God loveth a cheerful giver,’ 2 Cor. ix. 7. So shall the loins of the poor bless you, so shall they rejoice in the Lord greatly for you, and so shall the Lord make all his graces to abound towards you.

Secondly, Let me exhort them of the poorer sort, to learn to rejoice in the Lord for the care which he stirreth up in their brethren for them. It is too, too commonly seen in many of you, that as ye want the wealth of the world, so ye want also the grace of God. Ye sit and beg alms and relief. If ye have it not, ye murmur and grudge, oftentimes ye ban and curse ; if ye have it, some of you take it, and go your ways, and there is an end ; others of you say some formal words from the teeth forward ; but who is he, or where is he, that having received relief, lifteth up his eyes unto the Lord, and rejoiceth in him, for that it hath pleased him to work in their brethren such a Christian care over them ? Who is he, or where is he, that being sent away without relief, lifteth up his eyes unto the Lord, and prayeth unto him, that it will please him to increase their brethren’s care over them, and to give them bowels of compassion towards them, without murmuring or grudging at them ? Thus should ye do, and then surely the hearts of many that are yet hardened, would be opened towards you. Learn therefore, as to be thankful towards your brethren for their care over you, so principally to thank the Lord, and to rejoice in him for the care which he stirreth up in them for you. Learn to think on him, to bless him, to rejoice in him, more than any great many of you do. Look not only to the relief which ye receive, but look unto the Lord, whose work it is to incline men’s hearts to relieve you. Thus shall he be well pleased, and thus shall he incline men more and more to relieve you.

LECTURE LXXXVII.

Now I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at the last ye are revived again to care for me ; wherein notwithstanding ye were careful, but ye lacked opportunity.—PHILIP. IV. 10.

THE next thing which I noted in these words, was the Philippians’ slackness to care, for some time, for the apostle ; for in that he saith, ‘ I rejoice,’ &c., ‘ that now at last ye are revived,’ &c., he implieth, that their care had for some time slacked towards him : the word here used being borrowed from trees, which seeming in winter to be dead, flourish again in the spring, and having in it this similitude, that as trees which in winter seem to be dead and withered, flourish and grow green again in the spring, so their care, which for a time languished and decayed, now again revived and quickened in them. Whence I observe this lesson for our learning, that even in the faithful and dearest children of God, love and charity, and other good graces of God’s Spirit, are not always alike orient and eminent, not always alike manifest and apparent, but sometimes they languish and decay, and are as if they were not. Abraham, the father of the faithful, sometimes lied and spake not the truth, Gen.

xx. 2. David, a man after God’s own heart, after his murder and adultery, slept as it were in the dust a great while till Nathan awoke him, 2 Sam. xii. 13. Peter, unto whom it was said, Mat. xvi. 18, ‘ Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,’ had got a great fall, when he heard it said unto him, ver. 23, ‘ Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an offence unto me.’ The church of Corinth’s light was so dimmed for some while, that the apostle doubted how to come unto them, whether ‘ with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness,’ 1 Cor. iv. 21. And the Philippians’ care for the apostle was so for a while frozen and key-cold, that they seemed quite to have forgotten him ; so subject unto their infirmities are both whole bodies, and the soundest parts even of the best bodies, so long as they are clothed with the earthly house of this tabernacle. Not the best, but feels such decay in themselves ; not the best, but the best graces are so eclipsed in them, that they which

should be ‘as trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth their fruit in due season,’ are sometimes as dead and withered trees, whose leaves are faded and their fruit perished ; that their faith, which should work by love, is sometimes as fire under the ashes or embers ; that their charity, which should always be fervent, is sometimes ice-cold ; that their obedience, which should be with their whole heart, is sometimes divided between God and the world, so that not the best but may sometimes shrink in himself, and others doubt of him whether he belong to the covenant, whether he be in the state of grace.

But it is a doubt which need not greatly trouble. For though the children of God may sometimes seem to be as the wicked, yet are they not as the wicked ; the wicked are indeed like the heath in the wilderness, they are indeed corrupt trees, and without fruit, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots. For though some of them be, it may be, as the fig-tree which Christ cursed, Mat. xxi. 19, having leaves and shadows, and shows of divers good graces of God’s Spirit, yet look well upon them and consider them, and ye shall find that either they have no fruit, or naughty fruit on them, wanting all sap and moisture of God’s Holy Spirit in them. But the children of God only seem for a time to be as dead and withered trees, as doth in winter every fair and pleasant tree. For though now their leaves be faded, yet do they afterward grow green again ; though now they bear no fruit, yet afterward they do ; though now there seems to be no sap or moisture in them, yet is there in the root, and afterward shoots out ; though now they be as dead, yet afterwards they revive agaiu. Their faith and love are sometimes raked up as it were in the ashes ; but infidelity is bound up in the soul of the wicked, and hatreth eateth up the bowels of their belly. Their charity is sometimes cold, and their obedience full of defect ; but the very bowels of the wicked are merciless cruelty, and they sell themselves to work iniquity : or if there be any utter rind or bark, to make semblance and show of a good tree, yet is there no sap or moisture of God’s Holy Spirit in them. Well, they may have tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come, but it is but a taste that they have gotten, and the fruit that followeth it is but a blossom. But the children of God are taught by God’s Spirit, and howsoever for a time the Spirit shew not itself in them, yet doth it afterwards bud forth into the fruits of true righteousness and holiness. To speak all in one word, the wicked revive not after they seemed to be dead, because in truth they never lived ; but the children of God, after that they seem to be dead unto the life of God, at last revive again and do their former works : and again, the wicked only for some time seem to live, and at last shew plainly that they are, and always were, dead in sin ; but the children of God only for some time seem to be dead, and at last revive again unto the life of God, through the

power of the Spirit, which was never quenched in them.

Here, then, is both a word of comfort unto the distressed, and a watchword likewise unto all in general. A comfort it must needs be unto the afflicted soul, that in the dearest children of God, the life of God is not always so manifest ; but that sometimes they seem to be dead, yet at last do revive again, and do their former works. For why art thou so full of heaviness, O thou distressed soul, and why are thy thoughts so troubled within thee ? Art thou even dead in respect of the life of God ? Feelest thou no warmth of the Spirit within thee ? Art thou cold in zeal, cold in prayer, cold in charity ? Hast thou slacked that diligence which thou wast wont to use in the service of thy God, in thy duty towards thy neighbours and brethren ? Well, pluck up thine heart, be not troubled nor fear. This is no other thing than sometimes befalleth even the dearest children of God ; for sometimes even the best of them feel it to be so with them. Only tell me this : didst thou ever feel the life of God and the warmth of his Spirit within thee ? Hast thou sometimes comfort in the having of those graces, the want whereof doth now disquiet and discomfort thee ? Oh what else ? And there is thy grief that now thou findest not that comfort in them which thou wast wont to find. Well, be strong and comfort thine heart, for thy God at the last will revive thee. Thy God will establish the thing that he hath wrought in thee, and he that hath begun a good work in thee, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ; for whom he loveth once, he loveth unto the end. A cloud hath for a while overshadowed thee, and Satan for a time by a mist hath obscured thy light ; but thy light shall break forth, though not as the sun in his brightness, yet so clear that the life of thy God shall be manifest in thee.

Only let this watchword be unto thee, and unto all in general, that when you feel such decays of the life of God in yourselves, either by dulness unto any duty, or slackness in any service, then ye stir up the grace of God in you, and labour by prayer and every holy course, that the grace which seemeth to be dead may be revived in you. As therefore the apostle exhorteth, Eph. v. 14, ‘so say I unto you, ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead,’ even them that are dead in sin and iniquity, ‘and Christ shall give thee light.’ Shake off that drowsiness which hath seized upon you, and stir up every good grace of God in you. Quench not the Spirit that is within you, but strive to grow up in grace and every good gift of the Spirit. Is your love towards God’s saints abated in you ? Hearken to the apostle, Rom. xii. 9, ‘Be affectioned to love one another with brotherly love,’ and ‘let your love be without dissimulation ;’ and pray always unto the strong God of your salvation, that your love may abound daily towards all saints. Yea, whatsoever good grace is decayed in you, give all

diligence that it may be revived in you, and labour thereunto by all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

The last thing which I noted in these words of the apostle, was the apostle's excuse of the Philippians' slackness to care for him. For in that he saith, 'wherin notwithstanding ye were careful, but ye lacked opportunity,' he interpreteth their slackness to care for him, to proceed, not from want of good will towards him, but from want of opportunity to send unto him that which they desired. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that we are not always sharply to censure the languishing of our brethren in faith, love, or other virtue, but rather charitably to judge of them, and so much as in a good conscience we may, to salve and excuse them by a kind and favourable interpretation. Not the best but they have their infirmities, through which sometimes they so fall that they seem almost to be dead, as already we have heard, both omitting to do such things as they should do, and committing such things as they should not do; but many causes there may be of such failing in the performance of Christian duty. A defect there may be of zeal, yet proceeding rather from fear of disturbing the peace of the church, than from want of inflamed desire to see the house of the Lord, wall and roof, builded up in perfect beauty. A defect there may be of charity, yet proceeding rather from want of opportunity than from want of will to perform that duty. And so in other things, causes sometimes may be presumed to be of such and such faults which may excuse the faults. And therefore we are charitably to judge of the faults of our brethren, and rather in charity presume of that excuse for them which may be alleged, than by sharp censure to condemn them whom the Lord hath not condemned.

Where yet we must have these caveats, first, that we deny not that to be evil which is evil, that to be sin which is sin, as they do that deny Abraham to have lied, when he said of Sarah, 'She is my sister;' that deny Joseph to have sworn, when so often he protested unto his brethren, 'By the life of Pharaoh;' that deny Peter to have sinned (at the least mortally) when Paul withstood him to his face; and they likewise that say of pride, it is cleanliness; of covetousness, it is thrift; of deceit and fraud, it is wisdom; of hypoerisy, it is courteous humanity; of lascivious wantonness, it is requisite cheerfulness, and the like. For this is not charitably to bear with a fault, charity being, as not suspicious, so not foolish, to deny that to be evil which is evil; neither is it to excuse, but only by a lie. The second caveat is, that we do not farther excuse the faults and infirmities of any than in a good conscience we may, for if through favour or affection, or how else soever we do so, what good soever we shall do thereby unto others, surely we shall do great wrong unto our own souls; and howsoever haply we brook it for a time, yet in the end shall it sting like a serpent. 'A good conscience is a con-

tinual feast,' Prov. xv. 15. But if in any man's behalf, or to any purpose, we shall do more than in a good conscience we may, the end thereof will be bitter as gall and wormwood.

Here, then, are three sorts of men to be reproved and condemned; first, such as upon every slip of their brethren, and every blemish wherewith they can be tainted, are ready sharply to censure them, and by their censure to condemn them whom the Lord hath not condemned. 'Who art thou,' saith the apostle, Rom. xiv. 4, 'that condemnest another man's servant? he standeth or falleth to his own master.' Yea, chap. ii. 1, 'and in that that thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest even the same things,' or the like that thou condemnest in others. Let us not therefore be hasty to censure or condemn one another for every faint, but let us bear one with another's infirmities. Let us judge of our brethren after the rule of charity, even as we would have others so judge of us when we fall through an infirmity. There is one that judgeth both them and us; let us commit all judgment unto him that judgeth righteously, and in the mean time think rather the best than the worst, as charity bids us, than as our sense might lead us.

Secondly, Here are to be reproved and condemned such as with too, too light and slight terms pass over notorious and gross faults. For a generation of men there is that to the end, forsooth, that they may seem charitable in their judgments towards their brethren, speak good of that which plainly is evil, and interpret that unto the best which in plain evidence is sinful and wicked. What! must charity be a fool? As she is not suspicious, so she is not foolish; as she will not easily think the worst, so she will not suffer herself to be abused. For if, when a man should be present at the sermon, he be ordinarily bowling, or carding, or drinking, must I in charity think that he hath necessary occasions of absence? Or when a man willingly and wittingly runs himself upon the rocks by breaking the wholesome laws of God or of man, am I uncharitable if I interpret not his actions unto the best? Nay, rather he misdeemeth of charity that so thinketh; and this will commonly, if it be marked, fall out to be true, that he that so urgeth a charitable judgment touching such things, and such men as offend these and the like ways, will be most uncharitable in his judgment touching the best men and the best things. As therefore we are not too sharply to censure the falls of our brethren, lest we offend against the rule of charity, so let us take heed lest upon a foolish conceit of charity we think well of that which indeed is evil, and soothe them up in their sins whose sins were to be reproved. As the Preacher saith, Eccles. vii. 18, 19, 'Be not thou just over much!' and again, 'Be not thou wicked over much!' so I say let us not too sharply censure the faults of our brethren; and again, let us not too lightly pass over

gross and notorious faults; let us keep the rule of charity in judging our brethren; and again, let us not, to seem charitable, think of gross faults as small or no faults; let us not condemn where the Lord hath not condemned; nor again, let us not acquit where the Lord hath not acquitted.

Thirdly, Here are to be reproved and condemned such as (to excuse the faults and offences of others) say and do more than in a good conscience they may. For, as I am not always to condemn those men that do such things as wicked and ungodly men, nor yet to acquit all those that do such things as good and godly men, so neither am I to excuse one sort or other, further than in a good conscience I may. Charity must rule me to excuse as I may, affection may not overrule me to excuse more than I should. Albeit therefore to excuse the faults of men may seem a very charitable fault, yet if in any respect we do therein more than in a good conscience we may, our fault is inexcusable, and our judgment sleepeth not. Let us therefore go so far in the excuse of our brethren's faults as in a good conscience we may, but no further. Let us be ready to make the best of things we may, but let us ever remember to hold faith and a good conscience. And let this suffice to be noted from the several points in these words.

I speak not, &c. The apostle having signified in the former verse his great rejoicing in the Lord for the Philippians' care over him, now signifieth his rejoicing to be, not so much for the present gift they sent him, because therewith his want was supplied, as for their sakes, even for the fruit which should redound thence unto them, which he doth from the eleventh to the eighteenth verse. First, therefore (to meet with the suspicion of a covetous or an abject mind), he denieth that he rejoiced so greatly for the gift, because by it his want was supplied, and yieldeth a reason thereof, even because he had learned to be content with whatsoever state, which contentment of mind he professeth he hath of Christ, verse 11-13. Secondly, he telleth them that, notwithstanding he rejoiced not in their gift, yet he commendeth their liberality shewed both now and at other times towards him, verse 14-16. Thirdly, he telleth them that the thing wherin he rejoiceth is the fruit of their gift, for that it shall further their reckoning, verse 17. These be generally the points.

I speak not, &c. In these words, as I said, the apostle, to meet with the suspicion of a covetous, or at least an abject mind, denieth that he rejoiced for their gift, as if before he had received it he had been cast down through want, or were not able to endure his want. For thus it might be objected and said, Yea, indeed, doth this care for you so greatly rejoice you? Like enough your heart was down before this help came unto you. No, no, saith the apostle, 'I speak not this because of want,' because my want is supplied, as if before this supply came I had been cast down through want, or were not able to endure want.

'For I have learned in whatsoever state I am,' &c., which is a proof that it was not for the gift that he rejoiced, because his want was supplied by it, but for some other thing.

Where I note that the apostle was neither dejected and cast down through want, nor his affection much altered by the supply of his wants. Whence I observe who they are whom want doth not pinch, to cast them down through heaviness, namely, the children of God, who walk so as they have the apostle for an example. What? are not the children of God pinched with want? Was not Abraham driven by famine out of Canaan into Egypt? Was not Isaac driven by famine from one place unto another? And was not the same lot unto all the patriarchs? Had our blessed Saviour himself a house to put his head in? Were not the holy apostles tried, as by many other ways, so by want? Yes, surely, amongst other afflictions, want and penury is one, wherewith they that live godly in Christ Jesus are sometimes pressed and pinched. But this is it, though they be in want, yet they are not overcome of want; even as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 8, we are in poverty, but not overcome of poverty. They look unto the Lord, and they rest in him; they know that poverty and riches, even both these, are from the Lord, who maketh poor and maketh rich, and that all things work together for the best unto those that love and fear the Lord. And therefore they hang not down their heads, nor are casten down through heaviness; they murmur not at the Lord, nor break out into impatience, but patiently depend upon that God that commanded the ravens to feed his prophet Elias, and that feedeth the young ravens that cry for want of food. They know that the Lord careth for them, though the world seeth it not, and that he will supply their wants, so far as he seeth is good for them, and therefore they comfort and cheer themselves in him.

Let this then teach us not to look at men's wants, but how men are affected through their wants. Poverty or riches are no certain arguments of the love or of the hatred of God towards any. Both are mercies and blessings of the Lord unto the godly, and both are plagues and snares unto the wicked. By poverty and want the godly are oftentimes tried, to see whether they will blaspheme God to his face, whether they will murmur against the Lord, whether they can be content, as to receive good at the hand of God, so to receive evil, whether in time of adversity they will go away from the Lord. By riches likewise the godly are often tried, to see whether they will thereby grow proud and forget the Lord; whether they will, as good stewards, use them to the glory of his name and the good of their brethren; whether they will bear themselves as enriched by him, and make him their chiefest treasure. Both these, I say, are trials unto the godly, that the trial of their faith may be found to their praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of

Christ Jesus. Again, poverty is often laid upon the wicked for a plague, as Solomon sheweth, where he calleth the sluggard, Prov. vi. 11, that his ‘poverty cometh as one that travelleth by the way, and his necessity as an armed man;’ and riches are often given unto them as snares, as the apostle sheweth, where he saith, 1 Tim. vi. 9, that ‘they that will be rich, fall into temptation and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction.’ Poverty, then, or riches, plenty or want, are not the things that we are to look unto, for that these are common to the wicked with the godly, but how they work upon men’s affections, what effects they have among the children of men. Doth thy poverty and want make thee hang down thy head, break thy heart through heaviness, cause thee to murmur and grudge against thy God, drive thee to think of unlawful shifts for the supply of thy wants, &c. Then I stand in fear of thee, neither can I comfort thee with any sweet promise of grace and mercy. But art thou cheered in thy God, notwithstanding thy penury and want, dost thou wait upon him, depend upon him, and endure patiently? Is it enough for thee that he can supply thy wants if he will, and therefore then doest meekly submit thyself unto his will? Then surely thou art rich in God’s favour, and

unto thee belongeth an inheritance among the saints. Again, do riches lift thee up in pride above thy brethren, set thee a-running after noisome lusts and pleasures, choke the word, and the graces of God’s Spirit within thee, and make thee to start aside from thy God like a broken bow? Then thy riches are a snare unto thee, and they turn unto thy destruction; but if thou use them to God’s glory, the good of thy brethren, and thine own only honest and godly comfort, then they are a blessing unto thee, and a token of God’s favour. As, then, the wise man saith, ‘There is that gathereth, and yet scattereth,’ so I say, There is that wanteth, and yet is rich; that is rich, and yet wanteth; that wanteth the world’s superfluity, and yet is rich in God’s favour; and that is rich in worldly wealth, but poor in God’s sight. As we bear or drop under our poverty, so we are poor or rich in the Lord; and again, as we use or abuse our riches, so we are poor or rich unto God. If then we be in want, let us not be cast down with heaviness, but let us be cheerful in our God, who can supply what wanteth if he will, and will if he see it good. If we have plenty, let us not abuse it to riotousness and wantonness, but let us use it to God’s glory; so shall our want be comfortable, and our riches a blessing unto us.

LECTURE LXXXVIII.

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. And I can be abased, and I can abound, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 11, 12.

NOW in these next verses following, the apostle signifieth his rejoicing to be, not so much for the present gift itself which they sent him, as for the fruit which thence should redound unto them; and in these words, ‘I speak not,’ &c., he denieth that he rejoiced because his want was supplied by their gift, as if, before that supply came unto him, he had been cast down through heaviness, or were not able to endure his want. Where, in that he was not cast down through want, I observed who they are whom want doth not pinch to cast them down through heaviness; namely, the children of God, who walk so as they have the apostle for an example. Not that the children of God are never pinched with want, but though they be oftentimes in want, yet are they never overcome of want. For they look unto the Lord, and rest in him; they know that he maketh poor and maketh rich, that he can supply their wants if he will, and that he will, if he see it good; and therefore they droop not, they murmur not, but they depend upon him, they comfort themselves in him; which should teach us not to look to men’s wants or riches, but how these work on their affections, what effects follow these in them. For poverty and riches, plenty and want, even both these are common to the wicked with the godly, but they

do not alike affect them both. The wicked, through want, droop, and murmur, and fall to all unlawful shifts to supply their wants; but the godly are cheerful in their God, waiting upon him, depending upon him, enduring patiently; holding it enough that God can if he will, and will if he see it good, supply their wants. Again, through riches the wicked grow proud, run after their lusts and pleasures, oppress their brethren, and forget their God; but the godly use their riches to the glory of God, the good of their brethren, and their own honest and lawful use and comfort. As, therefore, we bear or drop under our wants, we are poor or rich in God’s favour; and again, as we use or abuse our riches, we are poor or rich in God’s favour; and therefore this is the thing that we are to look at, how men are affected through their poverty or their riches. Thus far we have already proceeded. It followeth:—

For I have learned, &c. This is the reason wherby the apostle proveth that he spake not because of want, that the supply of his want by their help was not the cause of his rejoicing, as if, before that supply came, he had been cast down through heaviness; but now that they had holpen him, he rejoiced. And his reason standeth thus: I have learned to be content

with my own estate, whatsoever it be ; therefore it is not the supply of my want by your gift that causeth my rejoicing, but another thing. ‘ I have learned.’ How had he learned ? He had learned out of the word that he ought to be content with his estate, whatsoever it was. But he had learned, by long experience, to be content with his own estate, whatsoever it were. If he were in labours, in perils, in watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings, in cold and nakedness, experience had taught him to be content with these things ; which he further prooveth by an enumeration of divers states, wherein he knew how to carry himself, and therewith to be content. ‘ I can be abased ;’ that is, if, being in poverty and want, I be contemned and debased, notwithstanding whatsoever excellent graces of the Spirit I have, I know how to carry it ; I can be content, and not droop the head : ‘ and I can abound ;’ that is, if I abound in honour, wealth, or favour, I know how to carry it ; I can be content, and not be proud. ‘ Everywhere,’ for time and place, and ‘ in all things ’ belonging to this life, ‘ I am instrncted ’ and religiously taught (for so the word signifieth) ‘ both to be full and to be hungry, and to abound, and to have want,’ and still I can be content with which of these estates soever, and neither grow insolent through my better, nor be cast down with heaviness through my meaner estate, nor relinquish my duty in my calling, whatsoever be my state. This I take to be the meaning of these words. So that here we have a reason of his denial in the words immediately before, and a confirmation of the reason, by an enumeration of divers states wherein he knew how to carry himself, and therewith to be content. Now let us see what instructions we may gather hence for our further use and benefit.

The first thing which I note is from the reason of the apostle, in that he saith he hath learned, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content. Whence I observe a lesson very fit for us, and for all Christians, to learn even to be content with our estate, whatsoever it is. The apostle had learned this lesson by his own long experience ; we have precept, and example, and experience to teach us this lesson. ‘ Godliness,’ saith our apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 6-8, ‘ is great gain, if a man be content with that he hath. For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. Therefore when we have food and raiment, let us therewith be content.’ Where first to the commendation of contentment, he shews it to be the fruit of godliness. For as godliness hath this honour, to be the only great gain of Christians, so hath it this fruit, that the man that is godly is content with that he hath. Secondly is set down the reason which might and should make us to be content with that we have, ‘ For we brought nothing into the world,’ &c. Thirdly is set down an exhortation unto contentment, which may and ought to be unto us a precept, that when we have food and raiment, we should therewith

be content. To the like purpose is that part of our blessed Saviour’s sermon, Mat. vi., where, in earnest manner, and by many arguments, he dissuadeth us from carefulness for food and raiment. For what else in effect is all that, but a precept to be content with that we have, and to depend upon the Lord his providence for the rest. But if we had no precept or exhortation at all, the very example of our apostle might and should prevail with us. For so he had taught us in the former chapter, Phil. iii. 17, where he saith, ‘ Brethren, be followers of me, and look on them which walk so, as ye have us for an example.’ He, then, being content with his estate, whatsoever it was, we should look on him, and likewise be content with our estate, whatsoever it be. Whereunto might also the examples of our blessed Saviour, and of all that have lived godly in Christ Jesus, be added. For all the godly were always content with whatsoever state they had ; and if they were not content, they were not godly ; discontentment being as great an enemy unto godliness as any. But what needeth more to this purpose than the experience of God’s children even at this day ? For this, so many as fear the Lord, learn by continual experience at this day, that be our feet pinched in the stocks with Joseph, or suffer we famine with the holy patriarchs, or be we persecuted by cruel tyrants with Elias, or be we spoiled of all that ever we have by thieves, or by fire with Job, or be we destitute of wealth, friends, and very necessaries for the maintenance of this life, or tempted, afflicted, and tormented with the faithful children of God in the primitive church, yet still the Lord careth for us, and by his will all these things happen unto us ; and, as he seeth it good, he delivereth us out of all our troubles. ‘ I have been young,’ saith the prophet David, Ps. xxxvii. 25, ‘ and now am old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.’ In which place the prophet bringeth in his own experience, to shew that the righteous are not forsaken at any time of the Lord, though sometimes they may seem to be forsaken ; neither do their posterity beg their bread, as driven to any exigent further than the Lord seeth it to be for their good and his own glory. And upon the like experience which the children of God find in themselves and see in others at this day, they may say the like. For though sometimes they be afflicted on every side, yet are they never in distress, but have a good issue ; though sometimes they be in poverty, yet are they never overcome of poverty ; though sometimes they be persecuted, yet are they never forsaken ; though sometimes they be cast down, yet they never perish, as saith the apostle of himself, 2 Cor. iv. 8. Why should not, then, even experience teach us this lesson, to be content with our estate, whatsoever it is ?

But, it may be, it will be questioned, what it is to be content ? The word which the apostle here useth properly signifieth such a one as is so content with

that he hath, as that he resteth wholly in himself, neither needeth anything of any other. And so only God himself is properly said to be content with that he hath, because he alone is all-sufficient, having all things in himself, and needing nothing from any other, being therefore only blessed and only perfect. But here in this place he is said to be content with that he hath, whose present estate wherein God hath set him, whatsoever it is, doth so satisfy him, that albeit he need many things, be much pressed, troubled, and afflicted, yet he is contented, and patiently undergoeth whatsoever the Lord his will is. Whereas, then, by precept, and example, and experience, ye see we are taught to be content with our estate, whatsoever it is, the meaning is, that the present estate wherein God hath set us, whatsoever it is, and whosoever we be, ought so to suffice and satisfy us, that though in it we want many things, yet with it we should be content. The reason is, first, because it is the state, be it poor or rich, wherein the Lord hath set us, and therefore not to be content with it were to resist his will, and to become fighters against the Almighty. Secondly, because howsoever we may seem to want things that are needful for us, yet are we not forsaken of the Lord; and indeed howsoever the world seeth it not, nor cannot, yet do we want no manner of thing that is good; for that of the prophet, Ps. xxxiv. 10, is always true, ‘The lions lack and suffer hunger, but they which seek the Lord shall want nothing that is good,’ good for them, and good for his glory. Want we may many temporal blessings, and yet we want nothing that is good, because the Lord knoweth it to be good that we want them. Wanting, then, nothing that is good, what reason but we should be content?

Should we, then, be content with our present estate, whatsoever it is? This, then, should teach us to take heed and beware of covetousness, that monster of sins, which makes us change our God, worship other gods, and fall down before a wedge of gold, being therefore called idolatry. The covetous man he is never content with that he hath, but the more he hath, the more still he craveth; his desire is like unto hell, it is never filled, but with the horse leech, still it crieth, ‘Give, give;’ and like unto the grave, or the barren womb, or the earth that still drinketh in water, or the fire, which, the more fuel it hath, the more it is nourished, he never saith, It is enough. If he have but a little, he thinketh he hath not enough; if afterwards he have more, yet he thinketh he hath not enough; if after that he have more, yet he thinks of another *enough*, and enough is always to come, though already he have more than enough. Yea, if, with Ahab, he have a kingdom, yet shall not poor Naboth be able to hold his own by him, but his vineyard, even his only vineyard, he must have, and he will have. Many such there are, which have enlarged their desires like hell, which can never be content with that they have, whatsoever they have; whereupon are

murmurings, contentions, mutinies, wars, thefts, and all unjust dealing, and, in a word, all evil. For ‘covetousness,’ as the apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 10, ‘is the root of all evil, which, while men lust after, they err from the faith, and pierce themselves through by many sorrows.’ We may not therefore be like unto these; but, hating covetousness, we must be content with that portion which the Lord hath given us, be it more or less; with that state wherein he hath set us, be it better or worse. If he see it good to lift up our heads when we are low, he will; and again, if he bring us down from on high, he doth it because he seeth it good. Howsoever, therefore, it be with us, let us be content. ‘Your heavenly Father,’ saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. vi. 32, ‘knoweth that ye have need of these things:’ and again, chap. vii. 11, ‘If ye, which are evil, can give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him?’ Doth our heavenly Father know what we have need of, and will he give us the things which we need? If, then, we need health, he will send it if it be good for us; if we need wealth, he will send it if it be good for us; if we need liberty, he will send it if it be good for us; if we need peace or love in the world, he will give it if it be good for us; and generally, whatsoever we need we shall have, if he see it to be good for us. Let us not, therefore, with the covetous worldling, never think we have enough, nor, with the malcontented person, always mislike our present state, whatsoever it is. He that openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness, hath enough for us always in store, liberty enough, health enough, wealth enough, &c., to reach out unto us if he see it good for us. Let our eyes, therefore, always wait upon him, and let us learn, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content.

The second thing which I note, is from the confirmation of the apostle’s reason, where he saith, ‘I can be abased,’ &c. For in that he saith, ‘I can be abased, and I can abound, be full and hungry,’ &c., he speaketh as well upon experience in himself, as he had found that he could do, as upon a religious knowledge that he should do so. So that he had as well felt hunger and want, and been abased, as been full and abounded. Whence I observe, that the Lord in bestowing his temporal blessings upon his children, doth not always keep the same course, but some he blesseth with plenty and abundance, others he exerciseth with penury and want, and unto others he giveth experience of both. Abraham and Lot were so rich in sheep and cattle, and so full of substance, that the land could not bear them that they might dwell together, Gen. xiii. 6. Boaz likewise was a man of great power, Ruth ii. 1, both for virtue, authority, and riches. Solomon exceeded in riches all the men that ever were before him or after him, 1 Kings x. 23. And to be silent in the rest, of that good convert

Zacchaeus, Luke xix. 2, it is said, that he was rich. Again, the widow was but poor, that threw but two mites into the treasury, and yet cast in all that she had, even all her living, Mark xii. 42. That Lazarus, Luke xvi. 20, who, when he died, was carried into Abraham's bosom, was a very poor beggar. Those, Heb. xi. 37, that 'wandered up and down in sheepskins and in goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, and tormented: that wandered in wildernesses, and mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth,' were no great men, it may well be thought, in the world. Yea, our blessed Saviour saith of himself, Mat. viii. 20, that 'the foxes had holes, and the birds of the heaven had nests, but the Son of man had not whereto rest his head.' And again, Job in his time was 'the greatest man for substance and wealth of all the men of the east,' Job i. 3, and likewise he was as bare, and poor, and distressed, as the devil by God's permission could make him. It is like that Mordecai and Esther, in the land of their captivity, had no great abundance and plenty for a while, Esther ii.; but after a while the Lord exalted them both unto great honour and dignity, where they had all things at their desire, chap. viii. Our apostle saith, both of himself and of others, 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, &c., that they did 'both hunger, and thirst, and were naked, and buffeted, and had no certain dwelling place; that they laboured, working with their own hands; were reviled, persecuted, despised, and made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things;' and yet what by miracles which he wrought, diseases which he healed, and soul-conversions which by his ministry were wrought, he was often much honoured, and many times abounded. Thus the Lord ministereth his temporal blessings as he will, to some more, to some less, and to the same men at some times more, and at some times less; even to all, and at all times, according to the good pleasure of his will. In some of his children he will be glorified by their poverty and want, by their crosses and afflictions, by their losses and disgraces; for in that in these things he giveth them a patient, and contented, and cheerful mind, so that they are not overcome of these things, nor cast down through heaviness, as the wicked; herein God is glorified. Again, in some of his children he will be glorified by their wealth and riches, by their honour and preferments, by their power and authority; for, in that in these things he so tempereth them, that they use them to the glory of his name and the good of their brethren, and not swell thereby, nor abuse them as the wicked do, herein he is glorified. Again, in some of his children he will be glorified both in plenty and in want, both in honour and in dishonour; for in that by these things he so balanceth them, that they runn on an even course, and neither sink too low by the one, nor are lifted too high by the other, herein also is he glorified.

Let this then, first, teach them that abound in

wealth and greatness, these two points: first, not to disdain their inferiors in wealth and greatness, as too mean for them to have any dealing at all withal. For how mean soever they be in the world's account, and how destitute of all things soever they seem to be, yet may they be as great in God's favour, and abound as much in the graces of God's Spirit, as thou that hast all things that thine heart can desire. And yet what a great favour ordinarily it is for the inferior to be admitted to the speech of his superior! Well, admitting you both to be alike great in God's favour, the difference which I find betwixt you is this, that if thou be the greater and wealthier, thou hast the greater account to make, which may not be any cause unto thee to disdain thy brother. The second point is, that they use their wealth and greatness to the glory of God, and the good of their brethren. For not the having, but the well using of our riches and authority, &c., commendeth us unto God; and how much soever we have, if we use not well that which we have, it is no token to us of his grace and favour towards us. Nay, if he give us riches and honour, &c., and not withhold the grace to use them as we should, they are unto us an occasion of falling, of falling from God, of falling into idolatry, of falling into many foolish and noisome lusts, of falling into all the snares of the devil. Hast thou then wealth, honour, authority, &c.? They are the blessings of God bestowed upon thee, whosoever thou art. But wilt thou know whether they be special favours bestowed upon thee, as upon his dear child? Consider, then, how thou usest them; for so they are, and are not, special favours upon thee. Whereon, if we did so think as we should, we would not so delight and set our hearts on them as we do, but we would think of well using them a great deal more than we do. As many therefore as God hath blessed with these things, let them study to glorify the Lord by them, that so they may have comfort in them, as in tokens of his special favour towards them; and always remember to rejoice in the Lord, as in your chiefest treasure.

Secondly, For such as are abased and in want, let this first be a comfort unto them. For this, that they are abased and in want, that they are hungry, thirsty, cold, naked, reviled, persecuted, and the like, is no token that God hath forsaken them, or shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure towards them. Nay, this is the cup that many of the best of God's saints have deeply drunk of before them. Let them, then, comfort themselves in this, that thus they are brought into the fellowship of the saints of God. Be it then 'tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,' or all these that press us, let them not be 'able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,' but in all these things let us be 'more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.' Whatsoever we suffer or want in the world, let us comfort ourselves in this, that it is

the beaten way wherein many of God's saints have walked unto heaven. Secondly, let this teach them to bridle their tongues in their talk of them that are great and wealthy. It is a common fault with them of the meaner sort, to say of them, that they have their riches in this world, they have their honour here on earth. But we are to know, that the Lord hath them that belong unto him in both sorts of men, high and low, rich and poor. Neither, therefore, let plenty be a prejudice to them that abound; neither let want seem to privilege them that lack; but as every man beareth his want, and useth his abundance, so let him be thought to have his portion among the righteous.

Thirdly, Such as have experience both of plenty, and of want, let them hence learn, not to stoop at the one, or stumble at the other. Let not their wants dismay them, nor their abundance exalt them. The Lord giveth, and the Lord takeith away; and his name is still to be blessed. Whether, therefore, we are abased or abound, whether we be full or hungry; whether we abound or have want, everywhere, and in all things we are to bless him, knowing that all things are according to his will.

Now give me leave in one word to point at one other observation from these words. In that he saith, 'I can be abased,' and likewise, 'I can abound,' &c. I observe a notable pattern of great perfection in a Christian; for then we grow to a notable perfection, when we can both be abased and abound, be full and hungry, &c., and still be content with the one or the other, without murmuring or grudging. The philosophers and heathen writers have talked much of bearing both adversity and prosperity patiently, and have set down good precepts for walking constantly in them both, without drooping in adversity, or swelling in prosperity. But let any man tell me of the best of them, that kept that constant course in both, not daunted with the one, nor puffed up with the other. Nay, in this degree of perfection, none of them can, but our apostle must, be the pattern for us to follow after, that we may all of us say with the apostle, 'I can be abased, and I can abound,' &c. Yea, this is a thing which we should all of us know by experience in ourselves, that we can be abased, &c., and wherein we

should be instructed and taught, as in a mystery of religion, to be abased, and to abound, &c., for this is an holy point of Christian knowledge, to know to be abased, and to abound, to be content with either, and not to relinquish any Christian duty for either.

But, alas! how ignorant are all sorts of men herein! In the clergy, what ambitious seeking after the chiefest dignities! What heaping of livings one upon another, benefice upon benefice, prebend upon prebend, and of benefices *in commendam* upon bishoprics! In the temporality, what joining of house to house, and laying of field to field! What prying and prowling into all kinds of commodities! What thirsting and gaping still after more, more! And what is the cause of all? We have not learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to have want. It may be, we can abound, but we cannot be abased; it may be, we can be full, but we cannot be hungry; it may be, we can be away with plenty, but not with want. This pricks and pinches, and is as bitter unto us as death; but have we learned to abound and to be full? Nay, we know not when we abound, or when we are full; and besides that, abundance and fulness makes us wanton, and proud, and forgetful of such Christian duties as we ought to perform, as might easily have been proved, if time had given leave.

Long we, then, in our souls to grow forward in a good degree of Christian perfection? Let us learn both to be abased and to abound, &c. Let not abundance or plenty make us wanton, or proud, or forgetful of our Christian duties; neither let penury and want make us murmur, or faint, or cast us down through heaviness. Let us walk constantly in both, in both let us be content, and in both walk in those holy ways which God hath ordained us to walk in. If we can once take out this lesson, it will bring with it such a Christian perfection, that we shall not be to seek almost in any point of Christianity. Let us therefore apply it, and as we grow either in wealth, or in want, let us think on it, that daily more and more we may know to be abased, and to abound, and that daily more and more we may be instructed, every where, and in all things, both to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to have want.

LECTURE LXXXIX.

I am able to do all things through the help of Christ, which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 13, 14.

I AM able to do all things, &c. We have heard what things the apostle assumed to himself, and they were great things: as that he had learned to be content with his estate, whatsoever it were; that he knew both to be abased, and to abound; that everywhere, and in all things, he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to have

want. Now, lest he should seem to boast too much of himself, or to give others occasion of boasting themselves, he giveth the whole glory of all that he is able to do, in all the things that he speaketh of, unto Christ, that enableth him thereunto. For the better understanding of which words, first, it will be needful to clear them from that sense whereto some wrest them.

For through the malice of Satan, no doubt, either blinding the eyes of our adversaries that they should not see the truth, or hardening their hearts that they should pervert the ways of truth, these words which by our apostle are added, lest he should seem to boast too much of himself, are wrested by our adversaries unto the greatest boast of man's perfection that can be ; these words wherein our apostle giveth all glory unto Christ, are drawu by our adversaries unto the glory of man, and his perfect obedience. For, to prove that man in this life is able perfectly to fulfil the law of God, they allege this place, as making to that purpose, where it is said, 'I am able.' So that they give this meaning of these words : I am able, not only to be abased, and to abouud, &c., but generally, 'I am able to do all things,' even all things that the law requireth, through the help of Christ which strengtheneth me, [that] is, if he help and strengthen me by his grace, that what ability I want in myself, may be supplied by him ; and hereupon they conclude, that man regenerate is able, by the grace of Christ working together with him and strengthening him, perfectly to fulfil the whole law of God. Whereby, how much they pervert the meaning of the apostle in this place, we shall easily perceive, if we look but a little into the doctrine which hence they deliver. For who is he that is able to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and his neighbour as himself ? And yet this the law requireth, saying, Deut. vi. 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might,' and, Lev. xix. 15, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Again, who is he that is able to continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them ? And yet the law saith, Deut. xxvii. 26, 'Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' Again, who is he that doth good and sinneth not ? 'In many things,' saith James, chap. iii. 2, 'we offend all.' And John, 1 John i. 8, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' And 'sin' we know, 'is the transgression of the law,' chap. iii. 4, so that 'whosoever sinneth transgresseth also the law.' 'We know in part,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 'we prophesy in part.' Now, as is our knowledge, so is our faith, our love, our obedience ; for so long as we are clothed with the earthly house of this tabernacle, as our knowledge is unperfect, so our faith, our love, and our obedience are unperfect. Yea, in the very best of us there is always a rebellion between the flesh and the spirit ; and the better we are, the sharper oftentimes will the combat be. Who is he, then, that is able in this life perfectly to fulfil the law of God ? Unto Christ Jesus God gave the Spirit without measure, and he was able perfectly to fulfil the whole law of God, and did fulfil it for us, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, and

we might be made the righteousness of God in him. But unto us, I mean even unto the most regenerate and sanctified man, the Spirit is given only by measure ; so that the flesh and the lusts thereof are not altogether mortified and utterly tamed thereby, but oftentimes prickes they have in the flesh, and messengers of Satan, to buffet them. How far off, then, are the best from perfectly fulfilling the whole law of God ? Some indeed are said in the Scriptures to have walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord without reproof, as Zacharias and Elizabeth ; and others to have sought the Lord with their whole heart, as those godly kings, David, Asa, Josiah, &c. But we must understand that, as Jeroboam and others are said not to have followed the Lord with their whole heart, because they made and worshipped other gods, so those godly kings are said to have sought the Lord with their whole heart, because they gave the honour which was due unto God, to him alone ; and that Zacharias and Elizabeth were only, in comparison of others, said to have walked holily and unblameably before men. For if their ways should have been examined before the Lord, then that of the prophet, Ps. cxliii. 2, should have been found true, 'In thy sight, O Lord, shall no flesh living be justified ;' and well might that of Eliphaz unto Job have been said of them, Job xv. 14-16, 'What is man, that he should be clean ? and he that is born of woman, that he should be just ? Behold, he found no stedfastness in his saints ; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight ; how much more is man abominable and filthy, which drinketh iniquity like water !' In a word, not any of the sons of men that ever were since the fall of man, or are, were or are able to fulfil the law of God, but only unperfectly, and not in any sort perfectly, otherwise than by imputation, Christ his perfect obedience being imputed unto them through faith, and that which is unperfect in their obedience being covered, and not imputed unto them through Christ ; so that ye see the doctrine which they deliver from these words, is quite repugnant unto the doctrine of the Holy Ghost throughout the whole Scripture. And therefore that cannot be the meaning of these words which they do give.

Again, if the Rhemists had thought these words to have made any whit to that purpose, it is very like they would not have failed to have given that note hence ; for we see how ready they are to wrest all places to the maintenance of their erroneous opinions ; so that they, passing this place over with silence, it is very like that they otherwise thought of the meaning of these words, than others of their profession have done and do. Whether, then, we look unto the doctrine which they gather from these words, quite repugnant unto the doctrine of the Holy Ghost throughout the whole Scripture, or unto the judgment of some of themselves, as it may seem, it appeareth that the apostle's meaning is not, as our adversaries do imagine,

that he was able of himself to do all things, not only the things spoken of before, but all things generally which the law of God required, through the help of Christ which strengthened him, and gave further strength and virtue unto his own strength and virtue.

What, then, is the apostle's meaning in these words? Surely this, as appeareth by the tenor of them: to clear himself of boasting himself touching the things that he had spoke of, he renounceth all his own power and strength, as if by his own power and strength he had been able to do those things, and he attributeth all unto the power and strength of Christ, saying, 'I am able to do all things,' even all the things that I have spoken of; that is, 'I can be abased, and I can abound,' &c. For so this universal speech is to be restrained unto the subject and matter here spoken of, as usually it is in other places of the Scripture, or if we will needs enlarge it further, then thus, 'I am able to do all things,' that is, all things that belong unto my duty and calling. But how? By my own power or strength? No; but 'through Christ which strengtheneth' and enableth me. He doth not say, through the help of Christ, as it is in our English Bibles, albeit that also might be said, for that he is often said to help us in the things wherein he alone worketh altogether without us; but he saith, 'I am able to do all things through Christ,' whose work wholly and only it is to strengthen me by his Holy Spirit in my inner man (for so the word seemeth here to signify) to do these things, even to suffer adversity, and not be cast down through heaviness; and likewise to enjoy prosperity, and not be puffed up with pride. This I take to be the simple meaning of the apostle here. Where I note these two points: first, that the apostle saith, that he is able to do all those things; secondly, by whom it is that he is able to do all things, even by Christ which, &c.

In the first point, where the apostle saith, that he is able, &c., it is to be noted that he saith, 'I am able.' He doth not say, *I was* able, &c., for indeed before he was called to the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, he was not able to do so; but he saith, *I am* able, implying, that now that Christ dwelleth in him by his Holy Spirit, now that he is ingrafted into Christ his body by the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, he is able to do all these things, to be abased, &c. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that being regenerate by the Spirit of God, and ingrafted into the true olive-tree Christ Jesus, we are able to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to have want, and to do the things that are good. Before such time as we be born again of water and of the Spirit, and be made partakers of the root and fatness of the true olive-tree Christ Jesus, the very imaginations of the thoughts of our hearts are only evil continually, our throats are open sepulchres, our tongues are full of deceit, the poison of asps is under our lips, our mouth is full of cursing

and bitterness, our feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and calamity are in our ways, the way of peace we know not, the fear of God is not before our eyes; and in one word, we are wholly averse from everything that is good, and only inclined unto that which is evil, being not grapes but thorns, not figs but thistles, not good but ill trees, not lively but dead branches, not friends but enemies, not the sons of God, but the children of wrath, not citizens but aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise. But being renewed by the Spirit, our hard hearts are softened, our froward wills are reformed, our dark minds are enlightened, our inordinate affection are ordered, our wicked thoughts are bettered, and our whole man made partaker of the godly nature, that we fly the corruption which is in the world through lust, and study to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. So that henceforth we are able to fly that which is evil, and to do that which is good; which also those manifold exhortations in holy Scripture imply, when we are exhorted to follow the truth in love, to mortify our earthly members, to procure things honest before God and all men, &c. For albeit unto the wicked and unregenerate the Lord hath not opened their eyes or their ears that they can see the things that belong unto their peace, or hearken unto instruction, and receive understanding, yet hath he appointed thus to stir up his children, and made them able to do the things whereunto they are exhorted.

We do not, then (as our adversaries falsely charge us), in the question of free will, make men stocks and stones, such as, in the things that are good, do nothing at all. Ye see, we say, that being regenerate by the Spirit of God, we are able to be abased, and to abound, &c., to do the things that belong unto our peace, and such as accompany our salvation. As therefore the apostle saith unto the Corinthians, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that be lost,' so I say, If any man be not able to do the thing that is good, it is the man unregenerate, in whom Christ dwelleth not by the power of his Spirit. Here, then, is the point, not whether we be able to do the things that are good, for that we hold; but whether we be able by our own power and strength at all to do the things that are good, by whom it is that we are able to do these things, which was the second point that I noted in these words.

Touching the second point, then, ye see the apostle saith, he was able to do all things. But how? Through Christ which strengthened him. He was able, but the power and strength, whereby he was able, was whence? In any part from himself? No; no such word, but from Christ, who dwelt in him by his Spirit, and strengthened him so, that he could be abased, and he could abound, and still be content with his estate. Whence I observe, that the power and

strength whereby we are able to do whatsoever thing is good, is not from ourselves, but from Christ, who by his Holy Spirit so strengtheneth us in our inner man, that we can be content with prosperity or adversity, and are enabled to do the things that are good. And to this the Holy Ghost giveth witness in very many places : 2 Cor. iii. 5, ‘ We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God ; ’ where he denieth not that we are able to think that is good, but he saith that we are not able of ourselves, as of ourselves, but only by God. So in this epistle, ‘ It is God,’ saith he, ‘ which worketh in you both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure ; ’ where he denieth not that we are able to will or to do the thing that is good, but he saith that it is God that worketh in us both the will and the deed of his good pleasure. Not to trouble you with more places to this purpose, by these ye see that it is not of ourselves, but of God, that we think, will, or do the things that are good. We think the things that are good, but it is he that makes us think the things that are good, by suggesting good cogitations into us by his Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us. We will and desire the things that are good, but it is he that makes us will and desire the things that are good, by working good motions and holy desires in us, by his Holy Spirit which he hath given us. We fly the things that are evil, and do the things that are good ; but it is he that makes us fly that which is evil, and do that which is good, by ministering strength unto us through the power of the Spirit in us. We know how to be abased and how to abound, how to be full and how to be hungry, &c., but it is God that enableth us hereunto, by the strength of his Holy Spirit which he hath given us. Without him we can do nothing, as himself telleth us, John xv. 5, not think any part of a good thought, not will any part of a good desire, not do any part of a good deed, so wholly is every good gift from him ; but by him we are able to do all things that our duty requireth of us, though not in that degree of perfection which we ought, by reason of the sin which hangeth so fast on us, yet so as he will be well pleased with us, and perfect his praise in our weakness. Here then, first, falleth to the ground, that error of theirs who maintain that we are able to do the things that are good by our own power and strength, being only helpen by the grace of Christ. What is man, that he should desire to part stakes with his Maker ? Doth not God ‘ work all in all ? ’ The apostle saith so ; and shall not he, then, have the glory of all ? Hast thou any good thing that thou hast not received of the Lord ? The apostle thinketh not ; why, then, rejoicest thou in it, as though thou hadst not received it ? In Christ we have all good things that we have, whether for this life present, or that that is to come ; and whatsoever good things we do, we are wholly enabled thereunto through Christ which strengtheneth us. Let not us, therefore, set

foot into any part of his glory, but, as it is written, ‘ Let him that rejoiceth, rejoice in the Lord.’

Secondly, Let this teach us what we are in ourselves without Christ ; not fit for anything that is good, not able to do a good deed, not able to will anything that is good, not able to think a good thought, content with no estate, in adversity cast down with heaviness, in prosperity puffed up with pride, in want comfortless, in abundance reckless, and much worse than thus. And yet how ready are we to soothe up ourselves, and how gladly do we hear the praises of others for anything that we say or do well ! Nay, rather than fail, we will break out into our own praises ; and, worse than that, we will either shut him out of all, unto whom all praise is due, or else enter upon a part with him. So far in love are we with ourselves, that we forget Christ, though without Christ there be nothing to be loved in us. But let us learn to know what we are in ourselves, and let us be confounded in ourselves ; and for whatsoever we say or do well, let him have the praise, unto whom all praise is due.

Thirdly, This should teach us in all things to glorify the name of Christ Jesus, and to depend upon him. Are we persecuted, and yet faint not ; in poverty, and not overcome of poverty ; tempted, and yet stand fast ; any way troubled, and yet not dismayed ? It is by Christ Jesus. Fly we anything that is evil ; do we anything that is good ? It is by Christ Jesus. He knoweth what we have need of, and he giveth it ; he knoweth that without him we can do nothing, and therefore he strengtheneth us in all things. Sometimes his own arm helpeth us ; and sometimes he strengtheneth us, sometimes to do, and sometimes to suffer those things which otherwise we could not. How ought our mouths, then, to be filled with his praises, and how ought we always to depend upon him ? By him we stand, and without him we fall. Let our songs, therefore, always be of him, and let his praises be ever in our mouths, for such mercies as we have of him ; and let us pray always, with all manner [of] prayer and supplication in the spirit, for the strength of his Spirit.

Notwithstanding, &c. In these words the apostle, according to that wisdom that was given unto him, most wisely commendeth the Philippians for their liberality sent unto him. For the apostle, having before most peremptorily signified his constancy both in adversity and prosperity, that through Christ which strengtheneth him he could be content whether he were abased or did abound, the Philippians might haply say, Then our liberality needed not, you could have been as well without it as with it, and therefore we might very well have spared both our labour and our liberality. No, no, saith the apostle ; notwithstanding that through Christ which strengtheneth me I can be content whether I be full or hungry, yet ye have well done that ye have communicated to mine

affliction ; ye have well done, because ye have done your duty, ye have done that which Christ commandeth, ye have done that which hath great recompence of reward. But how did they communicate unto his affliction ? We must understand that we may communicate unto the affliction of God's saints three ways : first, when we suffer the like afflictions that they do for Christ his sake, whether it be at the same time, as Paul and Silas did, Acts xvi. 28 ; or at divers times, as now the saints of God which suffer and are persecuted for righteousness' sake, as were the prophets and apostles before ; secondly, when we are afflicted and mourn in ourselves for the affliction of God's saints, albeit we do not suffer in our bodies with them ; thirdly, when we minister unto them what comfort we can in words, and what help we can in deeds. And thus the Philippians communicated unto Paul's afflictions, lying now in prison, sending unto him their minister, and with him such gifts as might supply his wants. And this is it for which the apostle in these words commendeth them. I can only point at such things as were hence to be observed.

First, In that the apostle saith, Notwithstanding that I am able to endure want through Christ which strengtheneth me, yet ye have well done, &c., hence I observe, that the constancy, and patience, and contentment of God's saints, ought not to be any stay unto us of performing Christian duty which we owe unto them. And yet how willingly do we make everything serve to us for an excuse of slacking such duties as we ought to perform to God's saints ! If they be in prison, or if they be in any poverty and want, and bear it patiently and cheerfully, we commend them ; but neither by word we comfort them, nor by other our help we relieve them. And why ? They are cheerful enough, they need not our comfort ; though they want, yet they are content with that they have ; they beg not, and therefore we may spare our purse well enough. But our apostle tells us, that notwithstanding it be thus with them, yet we shall do well to comfort them and to help them. Yea, and surely it is the best done that is done unto them. For they by such their contentedness and cheerfulness, give good testimony that they belong unto the covenant, that they are of the household of faith ; and we, as we are to 'do good unto all,' so 'especially unto them which are of the household of faith.'

Secondly, In that the apostle saith they did well to communicate to his affliction, I observe, that it is a good deed to comfort and to help the saints of God in their affliction and trouble. And that it is so, appeareth both for that it is commanded as a duty, practised of the godly, and hath with it great recompence of reward. 'Weep with them that weep,' saith

our apostle, Rom. xii. 15. What is that ? That is, let their afflictions move you to compassion ; and in token of your compassion, comfort and help them in their affliction. The apostle to the Hebrews openeth it more largely where he saith, chap. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as if ye were bound with them ; and them that are in affliction, as if ye were also afflicted in the body.' Thus did the apostle himself, as himself witnesseth, where he saith, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak ? Who is offended, and I burn not ?' As if he should have said, Besides mine own afflictions, which befall myself in mine own person, there is no other afflicted but they touch me also with a compassion with them, both to sorrow with them and to help them as I can. And see the recompence of reward that followeth it : 'Come,' shall Christ say, 'ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat,' &c. Thus the Lord in mercy, and for his promise' sake, rewardeth them that comfort and help his poor afflicted saints in their affliction, whatsoever it is. So that we cannot doubt but that it is well done to communicate to the affliction of God's saints, by helping and comforting them.

It is, then, not well done not to communicate to their affliction. And yet who remembereth the affliction of Joseph ? Many good laws and acts we have for the provision of the poor : I wish due execution of them. Beloved, do we believe the communion of saints ? It is an article of our belief, and we will be loath to be tainted in any of them. As, then, we are joined in a fellowship with all God's saints, so should we be touched with a feeling of such of their miseries as are in any kind of affliction. They are bought with as dear a price as we are, they are members of the same body with us. And shall the head in the natural body stoop down unto the foot, if it be pricked or hurt, to look unto it and to help it ; and shall not we look unto our poor brethren and distressed, and help them ? Surely if it be well done to communicate to their afflictions, then it is not well done not to communicate to their afflictions ; and if eternal glory in the heavens be the recompence of their reward that communicate to the affliction of God's saints, then what shall be their reward that do not ? The King, even our blessed Saviour, shall say unto them in that day, Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungered,' &c. 'While we have therefore time, let us do good unto all men, but specially unto them which are of the household of faith.' Let us not forget the misery of the poor in their trouble. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy ; the Lord shall deliver him in the needful time of trouble.'

LECTURE XC.

And, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, &c. For even when I was in Thessalonica ye sent once and afterward again for my necessity.—PHILIP. IV. 15, 16.

AND, ye Philippians, &c. The apostle having in the former verse commended the Philippians for their liberality, sent unto him lying now in prison at Rome, as very well done so carefully to communicate unto his afflictions, in these two next verses goeth forward with the like commendation of their liberality, even since his first preaching of the gospel unto them. First, by comparing them with the rest of the churches of Macedonia, ver. 15. Secondly, by giving them this testimony, that even when he was absent from them, and labouring with other churches, they ministered unto his necessities, not once, but once and again. And lest by this his great commendation of their liberality, he might seem to look after a new benefit, ver. 17, he telleth them, that as his rejoicing in the Lord, whereof he spake before, was not for his own sake, or for the supply of his want by their liberality, so neither this his commendation of their liberality from the first unto the last, was for his own sake, or that he desired a new gift of them, but both the one and the other was for their sakes, and that in both he regarded the fruit which might further their reckoning. This I take to be the general purpose of the apostle in these words. Now come we unto a little more particular examination of them.

And ye. By this that he saith, *ye also*, &c., he meaneth that not only he, and the other churches of Macedonia, but they also knew this that he now speaketh. What? Namely, that in the beginning of the gospel, that is, at my first coming into Macedonia, and preaching the gospel unto you: for he speaketh not simply of the beginning of the gospel, but of the beginning of the gospel in that country of Macedonia, whereof Philippi was the chief city, and the first place that we read he preached in in that country, Acts xvi. 12. This then, saith he, ye know, that at my first coming and preaching of the gospel unto you, when I departed from Macedonia that I might preach in other countries also, no church of all the other churches of Macedonia, neither Thessalonica, nor Amphipolis, nor Apollonia, nor any of the rest, communicated with me concerning the matter of giving and receiving, but *ye only*. Where first, in that he saith, when he departed, &c., hence some gather that his manner was, where first he preached the gospel, to take nothing of them till his departure from them, and then to take of them sufficient for his journey to the next place, and for his provision there till he should depart from them. Secondly, in that he saith, no church communicated with him concerning the matter of giving, &c., his meaning is, that whereas he

had bestowed on the other churches spiritual things, he had not, as had been meet, received of them again temporal things. The phrase of speech here used is borrowed from merchants or others, which have their books wherein they set down their layings out and their receivings in, that when they make their counts there may be a proportion in those things. So he meaneth that between those other churches of Macedonia and him there should have been this proportion, that as he had ministered unto them spiritual things, so they should have ministered unto him of their temporal things. Thirdly, in that he saith, *but ye only*, he commendeth them above the rest of the churches of Macdonia. In the next verse, when he saith, ‘For when I was in Thessalonica,’ he addeth this farther to the commendation of the Philippians for their liberality, that besides their liberality at his departure from them, when he was in Thessalonica, the metropolitan city of Macedonia, and they had heard that he, having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and being now in Thessalonica, none communicated unto him, they sent unto him once and again, while he was there, to supply his necessity. In the verse following, when he saith, ‘Not that I desire,’ &c., his meaning is, as he said, ver. 11, that he speaketh not this, he commendeth them not thus, because he now, or at any other time, desired a gift of them so much for his own sake and for the supply of his own wants; but to signify the very true cause of his rejoicing, ver. 10, and the very true cause of this his commendation of them, he saith, ‘But I desire the fruit.’ &c.; whereby he signifieth that the principal thing which he regarded in their gifts and liberality, was the fruit which should follow thereupon to further their reckoning, for that the Lord in that day should reckon this to their vantage, and accept it for good payment. The phrase of speech here used is likewise borrowed from the merchant’s counting book; for as in case of the debt of a great sum of money unto a merchant, the more money that is noted in his book as paid, the more his reckoning is furthered that paid it, so the apostle signifieth that the more of their charitable works towards him were, as it were, noted in God’s book, the more their reckoning was furthered with God, who reckoned that to their fruit which they did unto him. So that the cause of his rejoicing, and commanding their liberality, principally was because of the fruit which thence redounded unto them from God, who would recompense it in the heavens into their bosoms, and accept it in merey as some acquittance of their debt. This I take

to be the true meaning of these words. And now that we understand the meaning of the apostle in these words, let us see what profitable notes we may gather hence for our farther use.

And ye Philippians. In that the apostle saith that when he departed from Macedonia, none of the other churches of Macedonia, but the Philippians only, communicated to his necessity; hence, it may seem, might be observed an example of great ingratitude in those churches that withheld their temporal things from the apostle, when he had ministered unto them spiritual things. But I dare not altogether so judge them, because of that notable testimony which our apostle giveth unto them in the latter to the Corinthians, where he proposeth their example unto the Corinthians, 2 Cor. viii. 1-4, thereby to stir them up to the relief of the poor saints, and testifieth that in their most extreme poverty they were richly liberal, that beyond their power they were willing, and that they even pressed the apostle to receive their relief towards the poor saints: a rare example of great piety and very tender compassion. So that I impute their not communicating unto the apostle's necessity at this time, rather unto forgetfulness, and some want of care for this time (which was some time the fault of the Philippians, as we heard before), than unto ungratefulness, or any such notorious fault. The apostle's purpose I take rather to be to commend the Philippians, than deeply to censure the other churches.

In this, then, that he saith, that when he departed from Macedonia, no church, &c., I note the thing for which he commended the Philippians above the other churches of Macedonia; which was, the performance of that Christian duty towards him, to minister unto him temporal things when he had bestowed on them spiritual things. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that where spiritual things are bestowed upon us, there we should minister temporal things; where the minister teacheth us with the word, there we should make allowance of maintenance unto him. Which point the apostle proveth at large in the former to the Corinthians, and by many arguments; as, first, by an argument taken from soldiers: 'Who,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 7, 'goeth a warfare any time at his own cost?' How much more should they that fight the Lord his battles, fight them at the church's cost? Secondly, by an argument taken from planters of vines: 'Who,' saith the apostle, 'planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?' How much more should they that plant and work in the Lord his vineyard eat of the fruit of their own labours? Thirdly, by an argument taken from them that are occupied about cattle: 'Who,' saith the apostle, 'feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?' How much more should they that feed the Lord his flock with the sincere milk of the word, be fed by them with temporal food? Fourthly, by an argument taken from the testimony of Moses, where he saith, 'Thou shalt

not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn,' for that was the fashion in Palestine; how much less should their mouth be muzzled, maintenance be denied them that labour in the Lord his husbandry? Fifthly, by comparing spiritual things with temporal things: 'If,' saith he, 'we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?' that is, things necessary for the maintenance of this life. Sixthly, by an argument taken from the allowance of the priests of the old law: 'Do ye not know,' saith the apostle, 'that they which minister about the holy things, eat of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar: so also hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' Thus ye see a large proof of this point in that one place by many arguments. Many other places there are pregnant also to this purpose, as when it is said, Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught in the word, make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods;' as also where it is said, 1 Tim. v. 17, 'The elders that rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially they which labour in the word and doctrine;' by which term of double honour many do understand reverence, and things necessary for the maintenance of this life. The point is so clear, that to doubt of it is to doubt of the truth of the Scriptures, which in so many places give so evident testimony thereunto.

Which may serve to admonish many of us of a necessary duty wherein we use great slackness. Some of us can be very well content neither to be taught in the word, nor to give any maintenance to the preachers of the word. And these are men altogether senseless, without all feeling of God or godliness, in whose hearts the day-star of righteousness hath not yet risen, that they should know or thirst after the things that belong unto their peace. Others of us could be better content a great deal to give something to stay the ministry of the word, that so we might continue in our ignorance, and sleep in our sins, than to have the word preached unto us. And these are men, not sick, but dead in sin, desperately wicked, and unto every good work reprobate. Others of us can be content to hearken to them that labour in the word and doctrine, and that they should preach often, but care not how little to hear of allowance toward their maintenance. If they speak of the ministers' duty, of the assiduity and diligence which they ought to use, of the necessity that lieth upon them to preach the gospel, of the woe that is unto them if they do not preach the gospel, we like them well, and commend them much. But if they speak of their own maintenance, of their allowance due on our parts unto them, what say we then? Then, forsooth, 'they tell their own tales, they preach for themselves! Nay, we can dispute very well against them out of the Scriptures in this point, and tell them that freely they have received, and freely they must give, Mat. x. 8, and that Paul laboured with his own hands,

because he would not be chargeable to them whom he taught, 2 Thes. iii. 8. But see how herein we deceive ourselves. He that saith, 'Freely ye have received, freely give,' doth he not immediately after say, that 'the workman is worthy of his meat'? What then, doth our blessed Saviour cross himself? God forbid. And yet either we must say so, or else that the former words make nothing against the maintenance of ministers, especially the latter words being both so plain in themselves, and likewise alleged by the apostle for the minister's maintenance, 1 Tim. v. 18. For the meaning, then, of those words; first I say, that they are to be understood of working miracles; which gift, as the Lord freely bestowed on his apostles and disciples for a time, for the better gaining of men unto the faith, so he would have them freely shewed forth upon men, that as Elisha the prophet could by no means be wrought to receive anything of Naaman the Syrian for healing his leprosy, so whatsoever sickness they should heal, whatsoever miracles they should work, they should not be wrought to take anything for it. Secondly, if any man shall contend that the words are to be understood of the Lord's work generally, that as freely they have received the grace, so freely they do the work, then I expound the words by that of the apostle Peter, 1 Peter v. 2, that they are to 'feed the flock of God, which dependeth on them, caring for it not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.' Surely it is no way the meaning of those words, that they that labour in that holy work should be debarred of wages for their labour. Neither doth the example of the apostle, labouring with his own hand, at all make against the maintenance of the ministry by the church. First, he professeth that he wrought with his hands, not for that he ought so to do, for he proveth that they ought to have ministered unto him, but that they might have no exception against him. Secondly, the example of the apostle herein is no way to press us, for that he needed not as we, to attend unto reading, but being immediately taught of God, and furnished with all knowledge in the third heaven, he was able at all times to teach the way of God perfectly, though he wrought with labour and travel night and day. But we cannot intend manuary matters, and do the duties of our calling. Our duty is to attend unto reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 13, and the church is to minister unto us necessary maintenance. How cunningly, therefore, soever we think we can dispute against the maintenance of the minister by the church, yet do we but deceive ourselves therein. This is true generally, that whatsoever we say or dispute, we will give as little to his maintenance as may be, we will withhold from him as much as we can, we think that well gotten that is saved from them, and we think every little too much that they have.

Beloved, I have no cause but to persuade myself better things of many of you. Only I speak how it

fareth commonly with men abroad. The people's readiness in all places to deceive their ministers in all kind of their tithes, is often spoken of unto us that have some farther experience therein than what we have by hearsay. As for us, let it not be so with us, but let us be ready to communicate unto him that hath taught us in the word, that there be no complaint of our not communicating concerning the matter of giving and receiving. Every labourer is worthy of his wages. Let us not deny them unto him that oftentimes steepeth his labours with us in his own blood. Nay, let us give them cheerfully unto him, as unto him that watcheth for our souls. It is but copper that we give for the purest gold. Let us not stand upon this exchange, but let us offer it most willingly.

The second thing which I note in these words is, that the apostle saith, that the Philippians only communicated with him concerning, &c. They waited not to see what the other churches would do, whether they would give the apostle aught or no, or what they would give, or when they would give; but they thought themselves what they were in duty to do, and that they did, though they only did it. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that look what is our duty to do, that we are to do, though none join with us. If Noah should have looked what the old world did, and have fashioned himself like unto them, he had been like to have perished in the waters with them. But he looked what his God required of him, and though none joined with him, yet he alone walked with the Lord, and therefore he alone was saved, when the rest of the old world was drowned with the waters, Gen. vi. 7. Or if Lot should have looked to the wicked conversation of the Sodomites, and defiled himself with their unlawful deeds, he had been like to have been consumed in the fearful burning of those sinful cities. But he looked to the law of his God, and though none joined with him, yet he alone walked in the ways of the Lord, and therefore when the city, and they that were in it, were destroyed, he was saved. Or if that Samaritan, that was cleansed with the other nine, should have stayed to wait what the other nine would do, his leprosy might have taken hold of him again. But he considered his own duty, and 'when he was healed, he turned back, and with a loud voice praised God, and fell down at his feet on his face, and gave him thanks,' Luke xvii., and therefore he was praised of the Lord, and cleansed of his leprosy. All which examples shew plainly unto us, that we are not to look what others do, but what we are to do; and though all the rest of the world bow the knee unto Baal, yet must we, with Elijah, look unto the Lord our God, and serve him alone: whatsoever it is our duty to do, that must we do, though we only do it. Though there be but few that strive to enter in at the strait gate, yet must we strive to enter in at the strait gate, Luke xiii. 14; neither may we follow a multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2. It is our duty that we must

look unto, and be there many or few, any or none besides ourselves to join with us, yet must we do that which our duty requireth of us.

This may teach us to reform a great fault in ourselves. We are none of us grown to that height of impiety (I hope) that in a desperate mood we will say, that we had rather go to hell with company than go to heaven alone. But this is a great fault with many of us. In matters of contribution unto any good purpose, what do we say? No reason we should contribute alone, we will see what others will do; if they contribute, we will; if they will not, we will not; and saying thus, we think we say well; and if we add this, let others do, and in proportion we will not be behind the best, then we think no man can say more, or better. But thus still we depend upon the doing of others, whereas in doing good we should one go before another, and rather strive to be examples unto others, than stand upon the example of others. If we be the foremost, it may be others will follow us; and if we be alone, it is better to walk in the way alone, than out of the way with others. In matters likewise of election, what do we say? We would gladly bestow our voice on the best, but the most go another way, and we can do no good by singling ourselves from the rest, a note of singularity we may bring upon ourselves; if there were any possibility to do good, we would bestow our voice as we should, but being none, we may not lose our voice that way, but bestow it another way. Thus we look at the example of others, and offend by the example of others, whereas rather by our example others should be condemned, which do not as we do. Beloved, let this be our rule, to look what we should do, not what others do. Let us do that we ought, though we alone do it, and let us fly the rest, how many soever follow it. Let us by our example provoke others to do that is good, and if they do not follow it, let their judgment be upon their own head. If we alone walk in the ways of our duty, our reward is with our God; but their judgment sleepeth not, that either will not walk with us, or forsake us in the way.

In the next verse the apostle giveth this testimony unto the Philippians, that when he was absent from

them, when he was in Thessalonica, they sent their liberality once and again unto him to relieve his necessity. Wherein first I observe a notable pattern of that great care which ought to be in the people for their minister. The people should, after the example of the Philippians, be careful to inquire into the state of their minister, and as they shall understand him to need this or that help, this or that encouragement, so they should be willing once and again, even as need is, with all cheerfulness, wherein soever they may, to help them. But far otherwise is the practice with us. If his living be small, and he such a one as laboureth painfully in the word amongst us, yet we will not relieve him; and if we send once and again unto him, it shall be when we have got some advantage against him, some that may vex and trouble him, and either weary him of all, or turn him out of that little that he hath. His bareness and his want shall be his reproach amongst us, but no cause of any holy care for him. It should not be thus; but as the Philippians did, so should we do, even take all care for them that teach us in the word.

Secondly, In the person of Paul, I note that it was Paul's necessity which the Philippians sent once and again to relieve. Whence I observe, that even the best ministers of the gospel of Christ Jesus are sometimes urged and pressed with necessity. In Paul, indeed, it was less marvel, both because that was the infancy of the church, and for that he always went about either planting or establishing the churches, and settled himself in no certain place. But now that the church is established, and the ministry settled, that now sometimes the very best should be pressed with necessity, I know not well what to say to it. It is certainly one of the shames and discredits of our clergy, that in many places the worthiest labourers want, and the veriest loiterers abound. Some lights of the church have either nothing, or as little as little may be; and again, some others, that either cannot or will not do any good in the church at all, have living upon living, and dignity upon dignity, heaped upon them. Ye see the note which I should prosecute, but time will not give me leave.

LECTURE XCI.

Not that I desire a gift; but I desire the fruit which may further your reckoning. Now I have received all, &c.—
PHILIP. IV. 17, 18.

NO T that I desire a gift, &c. In these words the apostle signifieth the very true cause of that his joy in the Lord, whereof he spake before, ver. 10, and the very true cause of this his commendation of their liberality in the two verses next before. For, as before he signified, in ver. 11, that the principal cause of his rejoicing was not because of his want, because

his want was supplied by their liberality, so now he signifieth that the principal commendation of their liberality was not for that he desired a new gift of them, as some thereby might haply imagine; but the principal thing which he regarded, both in the one and in the other, the principal cause both of his rejoicing in the Lord for their care for him, and of his com-

mendation of their liberality both first and last towards him, was the fruit which followed thereupon to further their reckoning in that day of the great account. ‘But I desire,’ &c. The phrase of speech here used is borrowed from the merchants’ counting-books; for, as in ease of the debt of a great sum of money to a merchant, the more money that is noted in his book as paid, the more his reckoning is furthered that paid it, so the apostle hereby signifieth, that the more of their charitable works towards him were noted, as it were, in God’s book, the more their reckoning was furthered with God, who, in the great account, should reckon that to their fruit and advantage which they had done to him. What was, then, the thing which the apostle principally desired, even more than their gifts, though he needed them? It was the fruit of their liberality, that they might reap the fruit thereof with God. And what was the fruit of their liberality? Namely, the furthering of their reckoning with God in that day when they should give accounts of that they had done in their flesh, whether it were good or evil; for the apostle knew that this fruit should follow their liberality towards him, that thereby their reckoning should be furthered with God, who would reckon that upon their head to their vantage that they had done to him. And this was it which principally caused the apostle to joy in their gifts and liberality. Thus much for the opening of the meaning of these words. Now let us see what observations we may gather hence, whereof to make some farther use for ourselves.

Not that I desire a gift. The first thing which here I note is the apostle’s diligent care to clear things as he goes. In ver. 10 of this chapter, the apostle signified his great rejoicing in the Lord for the Philippians’ great care for him, shewed by the things which they sent him by their minister Epaphroditus. Whereupon, lest it should be thought that before he received their gift, he had been cast down through heaviness, or were not able to endure his want, he clears himself of all suspicion of any such abject mind, and tells them, in the next verse, that he spake not because of want, that is, that he rejoiced not so much, because his want was supplied by their liberality; but there was another matter in it. Again, in ver. 11, 12, he signified that he could be content with whatsoever state he were in, that he knew how to be abased, and how to abound, that he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to have want. Whereupon, lest he should seem to have boasted himself too much of himself, as if by his own power and strength he had been able to do all those things, he clears himself of all such arrogant presuming of his own strength, and tells them, ver. 13, that he is able to do all those things; but how? by his own power and strength? No; but through Christ which strengthened him. Again, the apostle having said that, through Christ which strengthened him, he could endure want, and he could be content whether he were full or hungry,

&c., hereupon it might be thought that he made small account of their benefit, and could as well have been without it as with it. He therefore clears this point also, and tells them that, notwithstanding he could do all things through Christ, yet they had well done to communicate to his affliction. Again, in ver. 15, 16, he highly commendeth the Philippians for their great liberality towards him, even from the first unto the last, and preferreth them before all other churches of Macedonia. Whereupon, lest he should seem to affect a new benefit, to desire a new gift, he clears himself of any such desire, and tells them plainly that he doth not so command them for that he desireth a gift of them. Thus, sometimes to clear the truth of doctrine, sometimes to free himself from unjust suspicions, always to rectify them that they do not misconceive of things, evermore he clears matters as he goes. Whence I observe a good lesson for the minister of the gospel of Christ Jesus, which is, that he give all diligence in his teaching so to clear things as he goes, as that his people may not misconceive anything, either touching the truth or touching himself. He is to be jealous of both, even with a godly jealousy: of the truth, that no speech of his may cause them to err touching the truth; that he speak not anything against the truth, but for the truth; that in all simplicity and plainness he deliver the truth; or if at any time he speak something which may be mistaken, yet he so clear it before he leave it, as that there need to be no doubt of it. Of himself, that no speech slip him, nor any action pass him, whereby he may be noted of impatience, or pride, or contempt, or covetousness, or any such spot of life; or if he do speak, or do anything whereby any such suspicion is or may be fastened on him, that he so clear it, that he quite wipe it out; for if the truth be prejudiced, it is a stumbling-block in a brother’s way, and a woe is unto him that putteth a stumbling-block before his brother, to cause him to fall, Mat. xviii. 7; or if his own person be prejudiced, it is an hindrance unto the work of his ministry, and wherein shall he have any comfort if not in the work of his ministry? If the example of our apostle, even in this chapter, were not a sufficient precedent for all pastors of God’s people to this purpose, I might add thereunto both the example of our blessed Saviour, and likewise of the rest of the apostles; for whoso looketh into the New Testament, shall see them always so diligent in this point, as they do not miss the teaching of anything which might either prejudice the truth, or their own persons. But I pass over further proof for this point.

This first might serve for a very good instruction unto many in the ministry in these our days; for how many are there in many places, that sometimes move more doubts than they do answer! how many that sometimes so speak, as that they leave their hearers in greater suspense than they found them! how many that so speak, as that their hearers, by that they

speak, cannot discern whether they be protestants or papists ! how many that couch their matters so closely, and handle things so obscurely, as if they would not be understood ! of whom ye shall hear some say when they come from them, they are fine men, great scholars, learned divines ; but ask them what they learned, they can say just nothing. How many are there that say they care not what, nor what men gather of that they say ! how many that speak smoothly, how many that speak eagerly, and yet never labour to clear themselves of hatred and of flattery ! some are negligent and careless to consider what they speak, and these never think of clearing things as they go ; others are so little zealous of the truth, that, though something slip them which may hazard the truth, yet they will willingly let it go ; and these care not for clearing things as they go ; others love to carry things in the clouds, and so to speak, as that a man shall be little the better or the wiser ; and these will not clear points as they go. But, beloved, what should I speak to you of these things ? Ye see what duty lieth upon us by the example of the apostle, even so to clear things as we go, as that ye may not misconceive of what we speak.

Hence, then, learn you to give all diligence in hearkening to the things that we speak ; for, if we be to be so careful as that nothing slip us which we clear not, lest ye should misconceive of anything, then surely are ye to be as careful of attending to that we speak, that so ye may conceive aright of everything that is spoken. Otherwise, if your thoughts be wandering, and your wits (as we say) a wool-gathering, what pains soever we take in clearing of things, yet do ye mistake things. And hereupon it is that we sustain many wrongs of them that hear us. We must take pains, and labour that ye may conceive aright of all that we speak ; and ye must sleep a little and hear a little, and wander in your thoughts a little and hear a little ; and then, in something mistaking us, ye must run upon us, and we said ye know not what ! Howsoever this be commonly a fault amongst hearers, yet, beloved, let it not be so amongst you. When ye come hither, pray unto the Lord that he will stir up your dull minds by his Holy Spirit, that he will vouchsafe to bless the ministry of his holy word unto you ; and when ye are here, give all diligence to hearken, that so ye may conceive aright of the things that are spoken, that so by the things which ye hear the Lord may be glorified, and yourselves edified, and builded up into a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

The second thing which I note is, the apostle's fatherly affection towards the Philippians ; for in that he saith, that he 'desireth not a gift, but the fruit which may further,' &c., he sheweth that as fathers, in their tender affection towards their children, desire not anything of them but for their behoof and good, so he, in his tender love towards them, desires not any gift of them, but for their behoof and good in the

day of Christ Jesus. Whence I observe what a fatherly affection there ought to be in the pastor towards his people, namely, such as that he seek not theirs, but them ; not his own profit, but the profit of his people, that they may be saved. Thus our apostle often professeth that he did ; as where he saith, 1 Cor. x. 33, that he 'sought not his own profit, but the profit of many that they might be saved ;' and again, 2 Cor. xii. 14, where he calleth the same Corinthians, that he sought not theirs, but them ; wherein he hath left a precedent for us, that as he hath done so we should do also. What then ? Is not the pastor to labour with his people in the word and doctrine for their salvation, and to desire nothing of them, to look for nothing at their hands ? No, not so ; for we heard the last day, that where spiritual things are sown, there carnal things are to be reaped, and that he that teacheth may as well require them of them that are taught in the word, as the soldier may do his pay, or the labourer his wages, or he that planteth a vineyard of the fruit of the vineyard, or he that feedeth a flock of the milk of the flock. But as at the first he is not to undertake this sacred and holy function in any covetous or ambitious desire for worldly maintenance or promotion, but in an holy desire to gain men unto the faith and knowledge of Christ Jesus, so, at no time, is he so much to respect the gift and maintenance that he hath by his people, as the salvation of his people in the day of Christ Jesus. In a place, therefore, where his living is allotted, and his maintenance set, the benefit of his living should not so much rejoice him, as to see his people offer their duties willingly, and give them cheerfully ; for that this is a token of their growth in piety, and a fruit which shall surely further their reckoning. And so likewise, in a place where only a voluntary contribution is made for a time, the allowance, whatsoever it is, is not so much to rejoice him, as the evident tokens of their piety therein which make it, which shall further their reckoning. And the care which, in both places, is by him to be taken, is not to be for his own profit, but for the profit of his people, that they may be saved, even for the gaining of them in the faith and knowledge of Christ Jesus. To which purpose, also, is that of the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. v. 2, 'Feed the flock of God which dependeth on you, caring for it not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.'

But as our apostle saith to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 15, 'Thongh ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers,' so may it now be said, Though many churches and many congregations have many ministers and teachers, yet have they not many so fatherly-affected as seek not their own profit, but their profit that they may be saved. If we should look into the popish clergy, it would easily appear by their practice what it is they seek and desire. For to what end are their trentals, dirges, masses, bulls, pardons, and such other their

trash, but for that they desire gifts, and seek after their own profits ? It were to be wished that they only were such, and that there were no such amongst us. But what shall we say of them that, so they may get in, care not how they come in—in at the window, or down at the house-top ? that stick not at these matters of simony and corruption, but swallow them down greedily ? that take the fourth, fifth, seventh, tenth, twentieth part of the living, and leave the rest unto the patron ? that fly to Tarsus when they should go to Nineveh, and rather reside anywhere than where they should ? that heap living upon living, and dignity upon dignity, and come either at none or but at some one of them ? that feed themselves, and fleece their flocks, but do not labour with them in the word ? that keep no proportion concerning the matter of giving and receiving, but reap as many carnal things as they can, and sow either none or as few spiritual things as they can ? Do not these seek their own profit more than the profit of the people, that they may be saved ? Are not these of those that seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's ? If they could say anything for themselves, it is all well, surely I cannot say anything for them. I wish that they who by their place may and ought to look to the reforming of these things, would in an holy care look unto them, and, as much as in them is, reform them. Work there will be, for hardly will these things be reformed.

Now as there are many in the ministry that neither are, nor will easily be persuaded to be so fatherly-afflicted towards their people as to seek them, and not theirs, or more¹ than theirs, so, beloved, are there many among you that hear us, and unto whom we are sent, that will hardly be persuaded of any of us that we seek not yours, but you, that we seek not our own profit, but yours, that you may be saved. Nay, if we tell you that it is not your worldly commodities that we so much seek after, that it is not your carnal things that we so much desire, but that the principal thing that we long after, even from our very heart-root, is your godly growth in the faith and knowledge of Christ, and your salvation in the day of Christ, what do ye commonly twit us withal ? Namely, this, that we shall long tell you thus before you will believe us. And this is one great cause, in my judgment, why oftentimes we labour all night and catch nought, why we spend our strength in vain, and for nothing amongst you, even your hard persuasion of us, as wanting all such fatherly affection towards you. But as the fault is great of such in the ministry as want such affection towards you, so is your fault also great, to think that none in the ministry are so affected towards you. Where therefore their presence, their diligence, their watchfulness, their care over you, give you no other cause, there persuade yourselves the best of your ministers and teachers. Yea, persuade yourselves of this, that they seek not yours, but you, that they seek

not their own profit, but yours, that ye may be saved, that they desire not a gift, but the fruit which may further your reckoning.

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle saith, that the fruit of their liberality towards him shall redound to the furtherance of their reckoning in the day of Christ Jesus. Whence I observe a notable commendation of charitableness towards the poor, afflicted, and distressed, and generally of good works. The commendation is this, that look what we give unto the poor and afflicted members of Christ Jesus, look generally what good we do, that shall, as it were, be reckoned upon our head in that day when we shall give our accounts what we have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil. For imagine that it were with God as it is with man, and that he had a book wherein were noted, as our debts, so our payments ; in the day when the account shall be made, whatsoever charitable work we have done unto any of God's saints shall be reckoned unto us for good payment, and the more we have done the more shall our reckoning be furthered ; nay, the good works that here we have done, they shall then be recompensed with eternal glory in the heavens. 'He that hath mercy on the poor,' saith Solomon, Prov. xix. 17, 'lendeth unto the Lord ; and the Lord will recompense him that which he hath given.' 'Whosoever,' saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. x. 42, 'shall give unto one of those little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.' And in the last day, 'Come,' shall he say, 'ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat,' &c., Mat. xxv. 34, 35. The reason of such recompence of reward is, because Christ reckoneth it as done unto himself, whatsoever is done unto his members here on earth. If they be persecuted, he is persecuted, as that his voice from heaven shewed when he cried, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?' Acts ix. 4, when not he, but his disciples were persecuted. And again, if they be relieved he is relieved, as that place of Matthew sheweth, chap. xxv. 40, where he saith, 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Now, shall any good be done unto Christ, the everlasting Son of the Father, and shall the reward be less than everlasting glory in the heavens ?

What shall we say then ? Is salvation in the heavens the reward of our works ? Yea, it is so. Is it a reward due unto our works ? Yea, it is so. Is it a reward due unto our works upon the merit of our works ? No, in no sort. For when we have done all that we can, Christ has taught us to say that 'we are unprofitable servants,' Luke xvii. 10 ; yea, when we have done all things that are commanded us. And whatsoever afflictions we suffer in this present life, Paul hath taught us, Rom. viii. 18, that 'they are

not worthy of the glory that shall be shewed unto us.' The merit that we can talk of for our works is to say with Daniel, chap. ix. 9, 'To us belongeth open shame ;' and with Job, chap. ix. 20, 'If I would justify myself,' by standing upon the merit of my works, 'my own mouth shall condemn me;' for, James iii. 2, 'in many things we sin all ;' and, Isa. liv. 6, 'all our righteousness,' even the very best of it, 'is as filthy clouts.' How is salvation, then, a reward due unto our works ? Even for the promise sake made unto us in Christ Jesus. For therefore do we claim salvation as due unto our works, even because God hath made that promise in Christ Jesus unto our works. But what was the cause of his promise ? was it our works seen or foreseen, that they would be of such desert ? No ; but of his own free grace and mercy towards us, according to the good purpose of his will, he promised it unto us. And therefore the apostle saith, Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace are ye saved, through faith ; not of works, lest any man should boast himself.' And again, Titus iii. 5, 'Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' Thus we teach, and everywhere we exhort all men unto good works, and holiness of life, without which no man shall see the Lord.

First, then, here, beloved, learn you to skill what manner of men they be that charge us that we preach only faith, but either mention not, or else condemn

good works. Ye see we tell you, out of our apostle here, that they shall further your reckoning in the day of Christ Jesus. And therefore we beseech you to abound in every good work until the day of Christ Jesus ; and know them to be of their father the devil, that say that either we mention not, or condemn good works unto our people.

Secondly, Hence learn to acknowledge and to magnify the great mercy of God, who accepteth that for a furtherance of our reckoning, which, if he should deal with us in justice, could stand for no payment ; for how, I pray you, stands it ? We should bring gold for payment into the Lord's treasury. But we bring lead, and he accepteth it for gold. Our best righteousness is full of unrighteousness, yet doth he accept it. What ? for our righteousness sake ? No ; for his mercy's sake, and imputeth unto us the righteousness of Christ Jesus. Let our mouths therefore always be filled with his praises, for such his loving mercies towards us.

Thirdly, let this be a sufficient motive unto you to stir you up unto charitableness, and unto every good work ; for seeing such is their acceptance with God, that in that great account they shall further your reckoning, what should stay you but that ye should labour to be fulfilled with the fruits of righteousness ? Time cuts me off that I cannot speak of these things, and I shall the next time be farther occasioned to speak of them by occasion of the text.

LECTURE XCII.

*Now I have received all, and am well filled : I was even filled after that I had received of Epaphroditus, &c.—
PHILIP. IV. 18.*

NOw I have received all. Hitherto we have heard the apostle's thankfulness unto the Philippians for their care for him, and his commendation of them for their liberality towards him. Now he commendeth their liberality, and withal addeth a promise of recompence of reward for their liberality, and so concludeth the epistle with praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord. In verse 18, first, he signifieth the faithfulness of Epaphroditus, when he saith, 'Now I have received all.' All ? what ? To wit, all that you sent by Epaphroditus. For herein he giveth him this testimony, that he had received the whole sum of him which came from them, which it is like they had specified. Secondly, he commendeth their liberality of the quantity of it, when he saith, 'I have plenty, and am filled.' For hereby he signifieth that their liberality towards him was not scanty, but was such as plentifully supplied his wants, such as filled his desires ; not that the gift which they sent him was so great and magnificent (for the churches of Macedonia were but poor, 2 Cor. viii. 2), but though it were but small, yet such was his contentment, as that he was as well satisfied, and as

fully, as the greatest man with his greatest riches. Thirdly, he commendeth their liberality, of the acceptableness of it unto God, when he saith, 'an odour that smelleth sweet,' &c. For herein, by a speech borrowed from sacrifices, made by fire for a sweet savour unto the Lord, he signifieth that their liberality was as acceptable and pleasant unto God, as the sacrifice that smelleth sweet in the nostrils of the Lord. These are the principal points contained in these words, and this I take to be the meaning of them. Now let us see what notes we may gather hence for our further use and instruction.

The first thing which here I note is the faithfulness of Epaphroditus, who kept nothing back of all that the Philippians sent unto the apostle, but faithfully delivered whatsoever they sent unto him. Whence I observe a notable pattern of that faithfulness which ought to be in all Christians, to discharge that trust, whatsoever it is, that is reposed in them ; even such should be their faithfulness, as that they whom it doth concern, may safely give them this testimony, that they have discharged the trust that was reposed in them. Such was the faithfulness of Samuel,

who when he had asked of the people of Israel, 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4, 'Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I done wrong to? or whom have I hurt? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.' They said unto him, 'Thou hast done us no wrong, nor hast hurt us, neither hast taken aught of any man's hand.' So faithfully he had walked amongst them in all things, that they give him testimony of his faithfulness before the Lord, and before his Anointed. Such faithfulness also our blessed Saviour figureth out unto us in the parable of the servants, into one of whom he gave five talents, and unto another two, to occupy withal until he should return whence he went, and in the end gave them this testimony, Mat. xxv. 15, 20, 'It is well done, good servants and faithful; ye have been faithful in little, I will make you rulers over much: enter into your master's joy.' And the apostle telleth us generally, 1 Cor. iv. 2, that 'it is required of the disposers, that every man be found faithful.' Be it public or private things, for the body, or for the soul, goods of the church, or other goods that we are trusted withal to dispense and dispose, it is required of us that we be faithful, even so faithful, that if need be, they whom it doth concern may safely give us their testimony thereof.

A good lesson for men of all sorts to learn, for prince and subject, that for their faithfulness each to other, each may receive of other this testimony, I have received all loyalty, I have received all right of sovereignty; for pastor and people, that for their faithfulness each to other, each may have of other this testimony, I have received all wholesome instruction from you, I have received all duties cheerfully from you; for master and servant, that for their faithfulness each to other, each may have of other this testimony, I have received all faithful service from you, I have received all that is just and equal from you. But have those or other like learned this lesson? I will particularly instance only in one sort of men, whose example best fitteth with this we have in hand. Patrons of ecclesiastical livings have the patronage and donation of livings committed unto them. The churches of several places have committed that trust unto them, to confer them wholly upon men willing and fit to discharge a good duty in them. But use they the like faithfulness herein that Epaphroditus did with Paul? Do they give all that is allotted unto him, unto their clerk whom they present? Doth the minister receive all that the church assigned him from his patron? Nay, I fear me, not many ministers can say, I have received all that the church gave me by my patron. Many may say, I have received by my patron some part of that which the church allotted unto me, perhaps the one half, perhaps the fourth part, perhaps the tenth, perhaps the twentieth part, but all cannot say, I have received all. But let such unfaithful patrons as thus neglect to discharge the

trust reposed in them, fear that they shall never enter into their Master's joy. It is for the good and faithful servant to enter into his master's joy, but the bad and unfaithful servant shall not enter thereinto.

As for us, beloved, let us look on the example of Epaphroditus, and, as he did, so let us labour in all things faithfully to discharge whatsoever trust is reposed in us, that as Paul did unto him, so others may give unto us, if need be, their testimony of our faithfulness. If we have any of the church's goods in our hands, any orphan's goods in our hands, any relief by any contribution for any maintenance of any of God's poor saints in our hands, or any such like trust be committed unto us, let us use all faithfulness therein, that even they whom our faithfulness doth concern may give us that testimony, that they have received all that should any way accrue unto them. But as for the sin of unfaithfulness touching any trust reposed in any of us, let it not be once heard of amongst us, as it becometh saints, that we may defy all the world to their faces, that shall, in the malice of their heart, seek to fasten any such note upon us. Let us with David hate the sins of unfaithfulness, and let no such cleave unto us: let us every man use faithfulness in whatsoever trust is committed to him, and let us assure ourselves of this, that as the Lord was with Abraham's servant, to bless him for his faithful service unto his master Abraham, so will he be with us to bless us in all our ways, and in all that we put our hands unto.

The second thing which I note is, the apostle's great contentment with a little. An evident token whereof is this, that he saith, I have plenty, and am filled. For wherewith was he filled? With that which came from the Philippians, and which he received by Epaphroditus, which, it may be, supplied his present wants, and somewhat more. Yet having received this, which, it is very likely, was no great matter, he saith, 'I have plenty, and I am filled.' Whence I observe a certain note of good contentment in the true Christian. If with that small or great store wherewith the Lord in mercy hath blessed him, he rest so satisfied that he can say, I have plenty, and I am filled, it is an argument of his Christian contentment, and an argument that he is truly rich indeed. For who more rich than he that is best content? or who better content than he that is satisfied with that he hath, as that he saith, I have plenty, and I am filled? If a man shall ask the covetous rich man whether he have plenty and be filled, his continual carking and caring, scraping and scratching together all that ever he can, will speak for him, and say that he is not full. If a man shall ask the rich usurer whether he be full and have plenty, his continual eating and devouring of men by his wicked and ungodly usury will speak for him, and say that he is not full. If a man shall ask the cruel oppressor and extortioner whether he be full and have plenty, his continual grinding of the faces of

the poor, and wringing from his brethren whatsoever he can, will speak for him, and say that he is not full. It is not great wealth and store that always fills a man, but the more a man hath, the more (oftentimes) he craveth; and the more cause he hath to think himself filled, the less he thinketh himself filled; and therefore, to be filled, sticks not at usury, oppression, extortion, bribery, or any unlawful and ungodly means, and yet never is filled, because never content with that he hath.

Will ye then know, beloved, who they are that are content with that they have? will ye have an evident token of great contentment in a good Christian? Mark where ye hear these speeches, I have enough, I thank God, I have plenty, I am filled; I am as rich as the emperor, for he hath but enough, and so have I. It may be that they that thus speak have not the greatest wealth in the world; it may be that they have but, as we say, from hand to mouth, or little more; yet these are the speeches of them that are content with that they have, which mind not earthly things, but have their conversation in heaven. Learn, therefore, to skill of men's contentment in their desires by the words of their mouth, and look by what token ye judge of other men's contentment, let others also, by the like tokens in you, judge likewise of your contentment. None more like to be free from ungodly desires, and attempts by ungodly means to be rich, than they that are content with that they have, neither any more like to be content with that they have than they that are so satisfied with that they have as that they think and say, I have plenty, I am filled. As, therefore, we desire to seem content with that we have, and to be free from all suspicion of ungodly desires and unlawful attempts to increase that we have, as not content with that we have, so let us follow our apostle; and as he, having that which supplied his wants, said, 'I have plenty, and I am filled,' so whatsoever be our store, if we have but food and raiment, let us think and say that we have plenty, and that we are filled.

The third thing which I note is the acceptableness of the Philippians' gift unto God, which the apostle signifieth by a speech borrowed from sacrifices, the odour whereof smellethe sweet as perfume in the nostrils of the Lord. Whence I observe how acceptable and pleasant unto God our works of charity are generally towards the poor, and particularly towards the ministers of Christ his gospel; they are as sweet smelling sacrifices, wherewith the Lord is well pleased. It is said, Gen. viii. 20, 21, that Noah after the deluge 'built an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings upon the altar'; and it is added, that 'the Lord smelled a savour of rest,' that is, he accepted his sacrifice, and was so well pleased that he ceased from his wrath. So in the mentioning of many sacrifices in Leviticus, it is often thus added, 'It is a burnt-offering, an oblation made by fire for a sweet

savour unto the Lord.' So that our apostle, calling our works of charity sacrifice and sweet smelling odours, evidently sheweth thereby how acceptable and pleasant they are unto God. Such a sacrifice Obadiah offered up unto the Lord when he hid the Lord his prophets by fifties in a cave from the fury of Jezebel, and fed them with bread and water, 1 Kings xviii. 4. Such a sacrifice Ebed-melech offered up unto the Lord, when he got Jeremiah the Lord his prophet out of prison, when he was cast into the dungeon, and dead almost with hunger, Jer. xxxviii. 13. Such a sacrifice the house of Onesiphorus offered unto the Lord, when he sought out our apostle diligently, and found him, and often refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain, 2 Tim. i. 16. These all, in their charitable works for the prophets and ministers of the Lord, offered up sweet smelling odours, and sacrifices acceptable and pleasant unto God. Such a sacrifice likewise the churches of Macedonia offered unto the Lord, when, in their extreme poverty, they were richly liberal to the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem. And with such sacrifices, whosoever they are offered, God is well pleased, as witnesseth the apostle, Heb. xiii. 16, where he exhorteth to such sacrifice: 'To do good,' saith he, 'and to distribute, forget not, for with such sacrifice God is well pleased.' Yea, he keepeth the good deeds of a man as the apple of his eye, and the alms of a man is as a thing sealed up before him.* Yea, look whatsoever good he doth unto the poor, the Lord shall recompense it him again into his own bosom, Prov. xix. 17. For the day shall come wherein it shall be said unto such workers of charity, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered,' &c.

Here then, first, learn what the Christian sacrifice is wherewithal God is well pleased. The sacrifices of the old law they are now abolished and done away, even since our blessed Saviour gave himself for us, to be an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God. Other incenses and sacrifices, which now in many places are offered and sacrificed unto idols and images, they are an abomination unto the Lord. It is not perfumes in temples, burning of incense unto saints, sacrificing unto stocks and stones, or hosts upon the altars, that are acceptable and pleasing unto God. Nay, he that doth these things is as if he cut off a dog's neck, as if he offered swine's blood, as if he blessed an idol! Nay, he is an idolater, and he is an abomination unto the Lord. If we will be sacrificing, the Christian sacrifice which we must offer unto the Lord to be a sweet smelling savour unto him must be the offering of the calves of our lips, even the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, for such his loving mercies as he hath vouchsafed unto us; or else the offering of ourselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable serving

* Eccl. xvii. 20.

of God ; or else the offering of our goods in a charitable devotion to the poor afflicted members of Christ Jesus. These sacrifices are commended unto us by the apostles of Christ Jesus; the first where it is said, Heb. xiii. 15, 'Let us by Jesus offer the sacrifice of praise always unto God ; that is, the fruit of our lips, which confess his name ;' the second, where it is said, Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye give up your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable serving of God ;' the third, where it is said, Heb. xiii. 16, 'To do good, and to distribute, forget not, for with such sacrifice God is well pleased.' And these are the alone sacrifice left unto Christians to offer, which are acceptable and pleasant unto God.

Secondly, Let us hence learn to strive every man to go one before another in doing good unto all the afflicted members of Christ Jesus. It is a sacrifice acceptable and pleasant unto God, witness the apostle here. It is more accepted with God than all burnt-offerings and sacrifice, witness the prophet, Hosea vi. 7. It shall further their reckoning in the day of Christ Jesus, witness the apostle in the words before. It shall bring with it great recompence of reward, through the promise made of God unto us in Christ Jesus, witness our blessed Saviour, Mat. xxv. Let us, therefore, as the apostle exhorteth, Gal. vi. 10, 'while we have time do good unto all men, but specially unto them which are of the household of

faith.' Let us, as Daniel counselleth Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 24, 'break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by mercies towards the poor.' Let us, as Solomon willeth, Prov. iii. 8, 'Bind mercy and truth upon our necks, and write them upon the tables of our hearts.' Let all hard-heartedness be far from us, and let the bowels of compassion be kindled within us, so often as we behold the distressed members of Christ Jesus. The law commandeth mercifulness and compassion even unto the poor beasts. How much more should we, that are members one of another, we that are members of the mystical body of Christ Jesus, deal mercifully one with another, and be fervent in charity one towards another. Beloved, let us consider ourselves, and provoke one another unto every good work. He that hath been slack, let him be no more slack, and he that hath been forward this way, let him be forward still. The day approacheth when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things which are done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil. Let us therefore make us friends of the unrighteous mammon, and let us lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, where neither rust nor moth corrupteth, and whither thieves do not break through nor steal. And this shall we do, if, as God hath blessed us, we give unto the poor, and take pity and compassion on the fatherless and afflicted.

LECTURE XCIII.

And my God shall fulfil all your necessities through his riches, with glory in Christ Jesus.—PHILIP. IV. 19.

AND my God shall, &c. The apostle's commendation of the Philippians' liberality we have heard, which was this : first, that in itself it was such as that, after he had received it, he had plenty, and was filled ; secondly, that it was a sweet smelling odour, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasant unto God. Now unto this commendation the apostle addeth a promise of recompence of reward for their liberality, and so concludeth the epistle with praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord. In verse 19, where the promise is, first I note the author of the recompence promised, which is God, whom the apostle, in great strength of faith, calleth his God, both for his own comfort and for the Philippians' encouragement. Secondly, I note what recompence is promised, which is, that his God shall fulfil all their necessities ; wherein he alludeth to that he had said in the former verse, that as he was filled by them, and all his necessities supplied through their liberality, so his God should fulfil all their necessities, and supply all their wants. Thirdly, I note the possibility of making this recompence, which appeareth to be easy, because God is rich : ' My God shall fulfil all your necessities through

his riches.' Fourthly, I note the fulness of the recompence promised unto their liberality, in that it is said that he ' shall fulfil all their necessities through his riches with glory.' All with glory ; that is, so plentifully, and abundantly, and gloriously, that it shall be to the glory of his name. Lastly, I note the cause wherefore, or the means whereby, such recompence shall be made, which is Christ Jesus, in whom, and for whom, and through whom, we have and receive both all the promises and all the blessings for this life, and for that that is to come : ' My God shall fulfil, &c., with glory in Christ Jesus.' The sum, then, of these words is this, as if he had thus said, As I have plenty, and am filled by you, so that all my wants are supplied, so my God, that helpeth me and comforteth me in all my troubles, my God, that seeth and regardeth your mercies towards me, shall, for a full recompence of reward, fulfil all your necessities, and supply all your wants, through his riches plentifully, to the glory of his name ; not for the merit of your work, but in and for Jesus Christ, in whom, and for whom, you and your works are accepted. This I take to be the meaning of these words. Now let us see

what notes we may gather hence for our farther instruction.

The first thing which here I note is, that the apostle saith, *my God, &c.*, which is not spoken by way of excluding them, as if he were not their God also, but partly out of the powerful might of his saving faith, partly to comfort himself in the midst of all his troubles, partly to note his upholding stay in all his troubles, and partly to imply unto the Philippians that what they had given unto him they had given unto God. For so it will appear, if the speech be well observed, that such near application hath always such signification. So David, Ps. xviii. 2, ‘The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and he that delivereth me, my God, and my strength, my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my refuge.’ So Isaiah, chap. xxv. 1, ‘O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, and I will praise thy name.’ So our blessed Saviour, Mat. xxvii. 48, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ In which, and many other like places, where the prophets, and apostles, and our blessed Saviour do use these particular speeches of *my Lord, my God*, and the like, they do not use them as thereby singling out unto themselves a peculiar God, but in some such like respect as before was mentioned, to wit, either through the great strength of their faith, or for their comfort in their troubles, or to note their upholding stay in their afflictions, or else to imply the communication unto God’s saints to be a communication unto God. Whence I observe that such speeches are no note of singularity, no speeches to be either scorned or reproved in them that use them with reverence and in fear. Which I observe because of them that, upon the hearing of such speeches, are straightway ready to brand him that useth them with some new name of puritan, or precisian, or the like, and in scorn to ask him who is his God, who is his Lord, and whether he have any peculiar God which is not our God and our Lord. Of whom I ask again, whether the prophets, and apostles, and our blessed Saviour, which used these speeches, were puritans, or precisians, or the like? If they were, why is it objected unto any man that he is? If they, notwithstanding these speeches, were not, why upon the like speeches is any man judged to be? Shall any man ask of any of them who is his God, or who is his Lord, or whether he have any peculiar God? Why should then any such question upon the like occasion be made? It may very well be that they who now ask such questions, if Paul were now living, and now spake or wrote thus, would ask him the like questions.

Wherein learn a notable policy of the devil. He seeth the great stay, and the great comfort that the child of God hath, when he comes so far as that, with boldness and confidence, he can say *my God and my Lord*. He seeth that whatsoever troubles do press us, whatsoever scorners do blow upon us, howsoever he seek continually, like a roaring lion, to devour us,

yet nothing can cast us down, if, through the powerful might of a saving faith, we can say *my God and my Lord!* He seeth that to come so near unto God as to call him *my God and my Lord*, is to depart too far from him, and therefore he laboureth against this boldness, and confidence, and near approach, and to this purpose hath devised to brand them with odious names that shall at any time so speak. Neither yet doth my speech tend to persuade the ordinary use of those speeches, *my God and my Lord*; for our blessed Saviour hath taught us to pray, ‘Our Father which art in heaven,’ and I know that our most usual speeches of *our Lord and our God* are most holy and most Christian. Only this I say, that it ought not to be prejudicial unto any man if at any time he say *my God and my Lord*. He may sometimes use them, and yet ought not, therefore, either to be noted of singularity or to be scorned or reproved. Let them consider what I say that are so ready upon such occasions to brand men with names that they know not what they mean, and let us in no sort follow their example. Let us join with them that say *our God and our Lord*, but let us not scorn or reproach them that say *my God or my Lord*. Nay, let us know that not we, nor any, can have any greater stay or comfort than in this, that the Lord is his God and his Lord. Thus much of this note by the way.

The second thing which here I note is, what recompence of reward the apostle promiseth unto the Philippians for their liberality towards him. The promise is this, that as he was filled by them, and all his necessities supplied by their liberality, so God should fulfil all their necessities through his riches with glory. Whence I observe this lesson for us, that look what good we do unto God’s saints here on earth, God shall recompense the same into our bosoms, both with blessings in this life and likewise in that that is to come. Deliver we the poor and needy in the needful time of trouble? The recompence is, Ps. xli. 1, ‘Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.’ Are we merciful unto the poor, and do we sell them corn good cheap? The recompence is, Prov. xi. 17, ‘He that is merciful, rewardeth his own soul;’ and, verse 26, ‘Blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth corn.’ Do we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, lodge the stranger, go to him that is in prison? The recompence is, Mat. xxv. 34, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world; for I was an hungered,’ &c. In a word, are we ready to do good, to distribute, and to communicate according to our ability? The recompence is, we lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, to obtain eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 19. Not a cup of cold water, given unto any in the name of a disciple, shall lose his reward, Mat. x. 42. So merciful, and gracious, and bountiful, and liberal is the Lord our

God, as that he doth repay one good turn unto our brethren with an hundred blessings from himself, and gifts of no value with an eternal weight of glory.

A great mercy of our gracious God, to promise or to pay such recompence of reward unto our works, and a notable inducement to stir us up unto all works of charity. The same motive the preacher also useth, where he saith, Eccles. xi. 1, ‘Cast thy bread upon the waters, for after many days thou shalt find it.’ Cast thy bread upon the waters; that is, break thy bread unto the hungry, be merciful and liberal unto the poor; though thy alms may seem to be cast upon the waters, though it may seem that thou shalt never have thanks or aught else for that good thou doest (for so too many think, that what they give unto the poor they commit unto a dead hand, that it perisheth, that afterwards there is no remembrance of it), yet, saith he, ‘cast thy bread upon the waters.’ And why? He addeth a promise of mercy that shall follow upon it, ‘for after many days thou shalt find it;’ that is, thy gift shall not perish, but thy God shall recompence it thee into thy bosom. Thou shalt find it in thy basket and in thy dough, and in the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, in the fruit of thy cattle, in the increase of thy kine, and in the flocks of thy sheep; or if not in these temporal blessings, yet in spiritual graces; or if not now for a season, yet after many days, as the husbandman receiveth the increase of his corn, which, when it was first sown, might seem to have perished; or if not in this life, yet certainly in the heavens, when the Lord shall wipe all tears from thine eyes, and crown thee with glory and immortality. Here is, then, another kind of reasoning than thy carnal sense and reason teacheth thee to make. Thou thinkest that the way to be rich is to be sparing, to hold fast, to give away nothing that thou canst save; but, as our Saviour saith, John xii. 25, ‘He that loveth his life shall lose it;’ so I say, he that thus loveth his riches shall not be rich; but the way to keep and to increase riches is to bestow them on the poor. Where they seem to be lost, thereto shall be found; where they seem to be cast upon the waters, there they shall be laid up in heaven, where neither rust nor moth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

Why is it, then, that the bowels of our compassion are shut up against the poor? For in many places the poor cry, and none helpeth them; they faint in the streets, and none succoureth them; they mourn in their souls, and none comforteth them; they perish for want of food, and none relieveth them. I persuade myself that it is not altogether thus amongst us, but in many places it is thus. And what is the reason? Verily, our disidence and distrust is the cause of all this. We see not how we shall have sufficiency for ourselves if we be bountiful unto others: we see not but we shall want ourselves if thus we do supply the wants of others; and though it may be we dare not

openly speak unto the point of God’s promise of a recompence of reward unto whatsoever we do unto his poor saints here on earth, yet do we think with ourselves that if we should rely much upon this, we might quickly bring ourselves unto the beggar’s staff, and then who would pity us? Thus, though the promise be made unto us of fulfilling all our necessities, yet such is our blindness that we cannot see, and such our distrustfulness that we doubt how our necessities shall be fulfilled, and therefore we hold back, and do not stretch out our hands unto the poor and needy.

Our apostle, therefore, to meet with this doubtfulness, telleth us that God, that maketh this promise unto us, is rich, and he will fulfil all our necessities through his riches. If a poor man make a large promise of great bountifulness, we may well doubt how he will be able to make good his promise; but if a rich man make such a promise, especially being a good man, and one that is wont to keep promise, who will make any doubt of the performance of his promise? Now our God, that unto our works of charity hath made this promise to fulfil all our necessities, is rich; for, Ps. l. 10, 12, ‘all the beasts of the forest are his, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills.’ Ps. cxlv. 15, 16, ‘the whole world is his, and all that is therein. The eyes of all wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in due season; he openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.’ All riches of grace and glory of this life, and of that that is to come, are with him, and unto whom he will he giveth them. And therefore the apostle telleth the Corinthians, saying, 2 Cor. ix. 8, ‘God is able to make all grace to abound toward yon, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.’ The Corinthians they did as we do, they feared that if they should give much to the relief of the poor saints, they should impoverish themselves thereby; for they thought that whatsoever was given to others was taken from themselves, and therefore they gave, when they gave, very sparingly, and nothing cheerfully. Whereupon the apostle tells them that God is able, to wit, through his riches, to make all grace to abound towards them; that is, to repay them all that they have given with advantage, that they might have enough both for themselves, and also to help others withal. So rich is our God that he can, and so good is our God that he will, do thus unto all them that sow liberally and give cheerfully. And why should any man doubt of this? When thou sowest thy corn in the ground, dost thou not hope to receive thine own again with advantage? and dost thou not reap oftentimes a great deal more than thou didst sow? Why, then, shouldst thou doubt, after thy dispersing to the poor, to reap seven-fold more for it? Why shouldst thou not hope to receive thine own again with very great advantage?

Considering these things, beloved, let it be far from us to doubt that poverty will follow our liberality. Let us not think with ourselves that the more we give the

less we have, but rather that the more we give the more through his riches we shall have. Let the poor therefore be our field wherein we sow our corn, and surely we shall reap plentifully; let the poor be our altar whereon we make our offering, and then surely our sacrifice shall be acceptable and pleasant unto God; let the poor be our chest wherein to hoard our treasure, and this shall surely further our reckoning in the day of Christ Jesus. If our liberality abound according to our ability to the poor, our God shall fulfil all our necessities through his riches; yea, he shall fulfil them with glory, even with such plentiness and abundance as that his name may be glorified thereby.

The third thing which I note is, that the apostle saith, that their recompence of reward was in Christ Jesus; whereby he giveth them to understand that God made this recompence of reward unto them of their liberality towards him, not for their works' sake as upon desert, but for Christ Jesus's sake only by grace. Whence I observe how the promises of God, touching the recompence of reward for our works, are made good unto us; the promises are made and paid only in Christ Jesus, not any way for the merit of our works seen or foreseen. In him God from the beginning loved us, and made all his loving promises of his sweet mercies unto us, and in him partly now he doth, and partly hereafter shall, make them good unto us through his riches with glory. This our apostle witnesseth where he saith, 2 Cor. i. 20, that 'all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and are in him amen;' that is, in him they are all made and performed, ratified and established. And the reason is plain; for why doth he make or perform such promises unto us, but only in his gracious love and favour towards us, every promise of his unto us being a testimony of his love towards us? And how doth he love us, but only in Christ Jesus, in whom alone he is well pleased? Mat. iii. 17. His promises then unto us being made and performed only unto us, and his love unto us being only in Christ Jesus, it is plain that all his promises are made and performed unto us in Christ Jesus alone. By him we are reconciled unto God, and in him, through him, and for him we have whatsoever we have. So that whensoever any promise is made unto us throughout the whole Scripture, either of blessing for this life, or for that that is to come, of temporal or of eternal reward, of safety from enemies, or of salvation in the heavens; still we are to lift up our eyes unto heaven, where Christ Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God, and to know that in him alone both the promise is made, and shall be performed unto us, through the love of God wherewith he loveth us in him.

Hence then, first, we learn not to credit any such as shall tell us that any reward is promised or given unto us for the merit or worth of our works, seen, or foreseen. For let but this ground be laid, which is

most certain and true, that all the promises of God unto us are made and performed in Christ Jesus; then must it needs be concluded, that in us no merits or anything were seen or foreseen, wherefore such promises should be made or performed, and that we are altogether unworthy in ourselves unto whom any such promises should be made or performed. For therefore are they made and performed in Christ Jesus, because in us there is nothing wherefore they should be performed or made. Or if there be, then as the apostle reasoneth touching justification, saying, 'If righteousness be by the law,' that is, by the works of the law, 'then Christ died without a cause;' so do I touching this point, if in us there be anything wherefore the promises of God should be made or performed, then in vain are they made and performed in Christ Jesus. I omit to speak of the great unworthiness of our best works, because I have spoken to that purpose often heretofore. Only for this time let this ground be considered, and if any man at any time shall seek to persuade you that this or that reward is promised and shall be given unto you for the merit of your works, tell him that it is promised and given unto you in Christ Jesus, and therefore not for any merit of your works.

Secondly, Hence learn the stableness of all God's promises made unto his children. As this here is, so they are all made in Christ Jesus, and therefore must needs be stable, and never fail. Even as we say, that whom he loveth once he loveth unto the end, because whom he loveth in Christ Jesus, him he always loveth, so his promises, being all founded and grounded upon his love, once made unto his children, shall not fail for ever, because they are all made in Christ Jesus: a notable comfort unto all God's children. Hath he promised life and salvation unto all that believe in his name? Hath he promised deliverance out of troubles unto those that love and fear him? Hath he promised to fulfil all their necessities that shew mercy to the poor? Here is the comfort, that not one of these promises shall fail for ever, because they are all made in Christ Jesus, in whom he loveth us for ever, and therefore keepeth his promises made in him unto us for ever. Let us not therefore fail of what he requireth of us, and assuredly he will not fail of whatsoever he hath promised us.

Thirdly, Hence learn that the promises made of God belong only unto them that are in Christ Jesus. The proof whereof is this, because the promises made of God are only made in Christ Jesus; so that until such time as we be grafted in Christ Jesus, and made one with him, we are mere strangers from the covenantants of promise, and quite aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Holy things are not for dogs, nor pearls for swine, nor the children's bread for whelps; his faithful oath is unto Abraham and his seed, and his holy promises unto them that be at peace with him. And who are at peace with him but they that

are in Christ Jesus his Son, by whom we are reconciled unto him? In vain therefore do they look after the promise, that bear not fruit in the true vine Christ Jesus. Worldly blessings they may have, and that in abundance. For, Mat v. 45, 'he maketh his sun to arise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.' But the sure promises of grace and glory are unto Jacob his people, and to Israel his inheritance. Will we therefore take comfort in his promises? The Spirit must witness unto our spirit that we are in Christ Jesus. Will we lay hold on the promises as belonging unto us? So we may, if in the assurance of our souls we can cry, 'Abba, Father.' And therefore as we love and long to be partakers of the promises, so let us in all things 'grow up into him which is the head, that is, Christ.' Let us be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful, and let us do good unto all, but especially unto them that are of the household of faith. If we communicate unto the necessities of the saints, the Lord our God shall fulfil all our necessities through his riches with glory in Christ Jesus. This promise is sure, because made in Christ Jesus, and belongeth unto us if we be in Christ Jesus, and walk worthy of Christ Jesus, abounding in this, and every good work, until the day of Christ Jesus. Now one word of that wherewith the apostle concludeth his epistle, saying, 'Unto God, even the Father,' &c.

Unto God, &c. In these words the apostle concludeth the epistle, with praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord. Where, first, I note that now he saith, *our God*. Before he said, *my God*; now, *our God*. So that howsoever more scruple be made about the one than the other, yet ye see there is warrant for both, to use this or that speech, as the occasions are. Secondly, I note that the apostle saith, *our Father*.

Not any but Christ alone saith, *my Father*. He, when he speaketh of himself, saith, *my Father*; when he speaketh of us, saith, *your Father*, as that place witnesseth where he saith, John xx. 17, 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' He can only say, *my Father*, because he alone is his Son by eternal generation; we only can say, *our Father*, because we are only his sons by adoption through Christ Jesus, and regeneration by his Spirit. Thirdly, I note that hero he is called our God in respect of our creation, and our Father in respect of our regeneration; our God in respect of temporal, our Father in respect of eternal blessings. Now unto God even our Father for both, even for all, be praise for evermore; that is, throughout all ages, from generation to generation, that as his mercies endure for ever, so his name may be blessed and praised for ever!

Whence I observe, that always, in all things, God, even our Father, is to be praised; write we or speak we, remember we or mention we temporal blessings or spiritual graces, still he is to be praised. And the reason is, 'For of him, and through him, and for him are all things.' In all things, therefore, let us glorify God through Jesus Christ, and let us always have that song in our mouths, Rev. vii. 12, 'Praise, and glory, and thanks, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for evermore. Amen.' And as our apostle concludeth this his epistle with praise unto the Lord, so let us remember to praise our God, for that it hath pleased him so often to assemble us together to hear a great part of this epistle opened unto us, and thence to be instructed in the things that belong unto our peace. The beginning of this work was his doing, and the continuance of this work is his doing. Unto him therefore, even God our Father, be praise for evermore. Amen!

LECTURE XCIV.

Unto God even our Father be praise for evermore. Salute all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me, &c.—PHILIP. IV. 20.

NOTHING being needful to be spoken touching the coherence of these words with the former for the better understanding of these, I will also omit the repetition of what was spoken the last day, and trust unto your faithful remembrance, the rather for that my desire is at this time to conclude my observations upon this conclusion of the apostle. In these words, therefore, now read, we have the conclusion of this whole epistle. Where, first, he concludeth the epistle with praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord. Secondly, he addeth, as his manner is, certain salutations. First, for conclusion of the epistle he saith, 'Unto God, even our Father,' &c., or, 'unto our God and our Father,' referring *our* unto both, as usually it is wont.

Where, first, I note unto whom all praise is due, even unto God our Father, our God, and our Father. And here by the way, first, I note that the apostle saith, 'Unto our God.' In the former verse he said, *my God*, now he saith, *our God*. So that howsoever more scruple be made about the one than about the other speech, the one being used and approved by all, the other being scorned and reproved by many, yet ye see there is warrant for both; and as the occasions are, so we may use this or that speech, unless we will take upon us either to censure the apostle for using as well the one as the other, or think that the apostle's example may not be our warrant to use as well the one as the other. It is, as I told you the last day, the policy of the devil, to the end that he may stay men

from this boldness and confidence, and near approach unto God, as to call him *my God* and *my Lord*, to brand them with most odious names, and to heap on them most opprobrious speeches, that shall at any time so speak. But if we keep the true pattern of the most wholesome words which we have learned of our apostle, as he willeth us, 2 Tim. i. 13, it is warrant enough for us; and if we do so, whatsoever opprobrious name or speech is cast upon us, lights as well upon him as upon us, and so long we need not much to move or trouble ourselves therat.

The second thing which here by the way I note is, that the apostle saith, ‘Unto God, even our Father.’ God he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is the Father of us all. And hereupon he saith, John xx. 17, ‘I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.’ But not any but Christ alone, when he speaketh of God, can say, *my Father*. The reason is in the difference of the manner how he and we are called sons. For in a large different manner are he and we called sons; he, by eternal generation of the substance of the Father, we only by adoption through Jesus Christ his Son, and regeneration by his Spirit; he the only begotten Son of God by nature, we all the sons of God, not by nature but by grace; not only as the angels in respect of our creation, but in respect of our adoption and regeneration. Albeit, therefore, one God be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of us all, yet because of this different manner, how he is his and our Father, we cannot say as he, *my Father*, but only *our Father*. Neither is it observed that any saith with Christ, *my Father*, as many say with Thomas, ver. 28, *my Lord and my God*.

The third thing which by the way I note is, that in this and other like places, where these speeches are thus joined together, our God is mentioned in respect of our creation, and our Father in respect of our regeneration; our God in respect of temporal blessings, and our Father in respect of spiritual graces, and eternal in the heavens. For as our God he created us and made us, but as our Father he adopted and redeemed us by Christ, and renewed us by his Spirit; as our God he gave us life, motion, and being, but as our Father he maketh us to live unto his praise, to walk after the Spirit, and to be new creatures. So that the joy and comfort of our souls is this, that our God is our Father, even our merciful and loving God, and tendereth us as his sons and heirs of his promises. These things I thought good to note by the way, by occasion of the first note which here offereth itself, viz., unto whom all praise is due, namely, unto God, even our Father.

The second thing which here I note is, the thing which is due unto him, which is, ‘glory, and honour, and praise, and thanksgiving; as witness also the four and twenty elders, saying, Rev. iv. 11, ‘Thou art

worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things,’ &c.

The third thing which I note is, the continuance of the time during which this praise is to be given unto him, which is ‘for evermore;’ that is, throughout all ages, from generation to generation. The reason of which everlasting continuance is, not only because of his eternal majesty and glory, but specially because of his everlasting mercy and love, that as his mercies endure for ever, so his name may be blessed and praised for ever. Many notes, ye see, might hence easily be gathered, and not unfruitfully insisted upon: as first, from the person unto whom all praises is due, viz., not unto saints or angels, much less unto brutish or senseless creatures, but unto God only, even unto God our Father; secondly, from the thing which is due unto him, which is praise and thanksgiving, not with lips alone, but from the heart and soul, which is the sweetest smelling sacrifice that can be offered unto the Lord; thirdly, from the time, that his praise is not to be temporary but everlasting, as his mercies are everlasting.

But, for this time, my meaning is to conclude all these in one short observation, which is this, that always, in all things, God, even our Father, is to be praised; write we or speak we, remember we with ourselves or mention we unto others, temporal blessings or spiritual graces, for this life present or for that that is to come, still he is to be praised. And to this the apostles give witness in every place. Our apostle concluding his epistle to the Romans, chap. xvi. 27, ‘To God,’ saith he, ‘only wise, be praise through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.’ And again, ‘Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, be praise in the church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all generations, for ever, Amen.’ And again, 1 Tim. i. 17, ‘Unto the king everlasting, immortal, invisible, unto God only wise, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.’ And the apostle Peter, 1 Peter iv. 11, ‘Let God in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.’ In which testimonies, to omit infinite others which might be brought to this purpose, ye see also the practice of the apostles, that always in all things they praised the ever living and only wise God. And the reason why it should be so is evident and clear, as the four and twenty elders yield it, where they cast their crowns before him and say, Rev. iv. 11, ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy will’s sake they are, and have been created.’ Or as our apostle yieldeth the reason, Rom. xi. 36, ‘Of him, and through him, and for him are all things; to him therefore be glory for ever. Amen.’ But not to seek after other reasons than our present text affordeth; he is our God, that hath created us, formed us, and made us for his

glory ; he is our Father, which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, and his mercies towards us in Jesus Christ his Son are for evermore ; therefore, always and in all things his name is to be blessed and praised.

But who is he that knows not this, that God is always in all things to be praised, and that there is great cause so to do ? If the question be asked, one thing will be answered ; but if the practice be looked into, another thing may be judged. If we know it and do it not, it cannot be but that we shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke xii. 47. And do we always in all things praise the Lord ? If ten lepers be cleansed amongst us of their leprosy, are there not nine of them that never return back to give God praise ? ten for one that never praise the Lord for his mercies ? May not the Lord now take up the complaint of Malachi, chap. i. 5, and say, ‘A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : if I then be a father, where is mine honour ? and if I be a master, where is my fear ?’ May he not say, An holy nation worshippeth their God, and good children honour their father. If I then be your God, where is my worship ? If I be your father, where is mine honour ? I doubt not but there are who with the prophet say, Ps. cxviii. 28, ‘Thou art my God, and I will thank thee ; thou art my God, and I will praise thee.’ But is it one of ten ? Nay, might we not go into a city, and with Abraham begin at fifty, and come down to ten, and yet not find ten such there ? We have certain words of course which we use, as to say, ‘God be blessed,’ ‘God be praised,’ ‘I thank God,’ ‘I praise God,’ but commonly they come but from the lips. It is not with us as it was with Mary, Luke i. 46, that we can say, ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.’ For though we bless God with our mouths, yet do we dishonour him in the ways of our lives.

If we say with them in Malachi, chap. i. 6, ‘Wherein have we despised thy name ?’ Wherein have we dishonoured our God ? I tell you, in that ye have profaned his holy Sabbaths. And if ye say unto me, Wherein have we profaned them ? I tell you, out of the prophet, in that therein ye have done your own will, and not the will of the Lord. For, not to speak of your absenting of yourselves, some of you, from your churches on that day, when ye should come thither, as it were, to his school, there to hear his voice, to learn his most holy will, and to be instructed in the things that belong unto our peace ; not to speak of your fruitless and unnecessary talking on that day, in your houses, or at your doors, or as ye walk abroad, when ye should either meditate with yourselves, or confer with others, of the things that ye have heard at the church out of the word ; not to speak of your running up and down with your wares, of your selling of your wares even in open shop, and of doing the works of your calling on the Sabbath

day, when ye should be either preparing yourselves in all holy reverence to the hearing of the word, or else be present in the congregation at the hearing of the word, or else be meditating or conferring of the things that ye have heard ; not, I say, to speak of those and many such like things whereby the Lord his Sabbaths are profaned, in that your own will is only done, and the Lord his will neglected ; what will ye say unto piping, and dancing, and drinking, and lording and ladyng, and May-gaming on that day ? Is this the Lord his will, or is it your own will ? Nay, is it not to oppose yourselves against his will ? He requires of you on that day to do his will, and not your own will ; but ye do your own will, and not his will. Can ye plead ignorance in this behalf ? Nay, ye have been taught what is his will for this day, and that this is not his will, but as much repugnant to his will almost as can be. And therefore is your sin the greater, because being taught in these things ye have refused to hearken and to obey, and chosen rather to follow the ways of your own heart. Oh, but ye took only the evening unto these delights. Yea, but the evening is a part of the Lord’s day, wherein he looketh to be served, as well as ye look to be served by your servants on the working days in the evening. The whole day is to be consecrated unto the Lord ; so that that whole day we ought to employ either in an holy preparation to his service, or in hearing, or reading, or meditating, or conferring of the holy word of God, and not otherwise. What ! no honest recreations and delights lawful on that day ? First, these whereof we now speak are not such, but dishonest and ungodly. Secondly, for those that are such, it is doubted whether they be lawful on that day. For if worldly but necessary duties be forbidden when we should attend on the Lord’s work, because we cannot be wholly occupied in both, much more things which seem but for pleasure are then to be abandoned.

Beloved, being occasioned at this time to speak of our dishonouring of God, whom we ought to praise and honour always, and in all things, I have instanced only in this one point of our dishonouring of God, both because the profanation of the Sabbath is one of the greatest dishonours of God, and one wherein we too, too much, and too, too grossly offend. ‘Did not your fathers,’ said Nehemiah to the rulers of Jndah, Neh. xiii. 18, ‘break the Sabbath, and our God brought all this plague upon us, and upon this city, yet ye increase the wrath upon Israel by breaking the Sabbath ?’ Consider your own ways in your hearts, and bethink yourselves well, whether amongst other our sins, the breaking of our Sabbaths have not brought heavy plagues upon us. And do ye yet increase the wrath upon Israel by breaking his Sabbath ? Mark well what I say, and the Lord give you a right understanding in all things. The Lord is always and in all things to be honoured and praised. Let us not in

this or any other thing dishonour his holy Name. Let us in all things glorify God through Jesus Christ, and let us always have that song in our mouths, Rev. vii. 12, ‘Praise, and glory, and honour, and thanks, and power, and might be unto our God for evermore. Amen.’ And as our apostle concludeth this his epistle with praise unto the Lord, so let us remember to praise God, even our Father, for that it hath pleased him so often to assemble us together to hear a great part of it opened unto us, and thence to be instructed in the things that belong unto our peace. The beginning of this work was his work, and the continuance of it is his work ; unto him, therefore, even God our Father, be praise for evermore, Amen.

Salute all the saints, &c. Now in the end of this epistle the apostle addeth salutations from himself and others unto the Philippians, which manner also he useth almost in the end of all his epistles. And first he remembereth his own salutations unto them, saying, ‘Salute all the saints,’ &c. Secondly, he remembereth the salutations of his brethren and fellow-labourers in the gospel unto them, saying, ‘The brethren,’ &c. Thirdly, he remembereth the salutations of all the rest of the saints that were at Rome unto them, saying, ‘All the saints,’ &c. Lastly, he shutteth up all, and sealeth, as it were, his letter with that usual prayer which he useth both in the beginning and in the end of all his epistles, saying, ‘The grace,’ &c. Salute, sometimes he addeth the manner, with an holy kiss. For that was the manner of the Christian salutation, to embrace one another, and to kiss one another. Salute, then, in token of my love and affection unto them, all the saints generally ; nor only so, but particularly every saint in Christ Jesus, without omission of any one, that being washed in the blood of Christ Jesus, and sanctified by his Spirit, do lead an holy and godly life amongst you. For such here he calleth saints in Christ Jesus, and that he would have every one of these in particular saluted, appeareth by his using of the singular number.

Here, then, first, I observe a good ground of that Christian custom commonly used in writing of letters unto friends that are absent ; which is, to send commendations, to remember their salutations and health-wishes to such of their friends as are joined unto them in any near bond of duty, or of love ; which, as it is a good testimony of their kind and loving affection towards their friends, so is it a good means to preserve and to increase friendship, and is (in effect) a prayer for their health and welfare. And for these causes it is that this custom of long time hath been, and is still, amongst Christians continued. Which may teach us always, by all means, to retain and maintain our love and friendship with the saints in Christ Jesus : and therefore, when we converse with them, in all loving sort to use them ; and when we are absent from them, in our letters to salute them, even every of them, as here our apostle doth. As

therefore the apostle before exhorteth, so do I, whatsoever things pertain to love, even to the preserving or increasing of your love with the saints in Christ Jesus, those think on, and do.

The second thing which here I note is, that the apostle saluteth the saints in Christ Jesus. Whence I observe that the name and title of saints is fitly and truly given unto men upon earth. ‘All my delight,’ saith David, Ps. xvi. 3, ‘is upon the saints that are on the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue.’ And the apostle in all his epistles still writeth unto the saints and faithful brethren, as ye may see in the beginning of all his epistles. But who on earth are fitly and truly called saints ? Even they that being purified by faith, and sanctified by the Spirit, and washed in the blood of the Lamb, deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. For they that are such, are led by the Spirit of God ; they have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is made of God unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Yea, but are not all the sons of men, so long as they dwell in these houses of clay, unrighteous and unholie ? How, then, can any in this life be fitly and truly called saints ? True it is that ‘he layeth folly upon his angels,’ and that ‘the heavens are not clean in his sight,’ Job xv. 15, and that truly and properly the Lord only is holy, and that of all the sons of men it is most truly said, that ‘there is none that doth good, and sinneth not, no not one.’ Yet in Christ Jesus all the seed which is according unto promise, is counted holy ; holy, for that he is made of God unto them sanctification and holiness ; holy, for that they are washed from their sins by the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the Spirit of grace ; holy, for that what is wanting in their obedience and holiness, is hid and covered in the perfect obedience and holiness of Christ Jesus ; and holy, for that sanctified desire which is in them after holiness. And therefore our apostle writing to the Corinthians, saith, 1 Cor. vi. 11, ‘Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ Ye are sanctified, that is, ye are made saints, and holy. So that, howsoever, in themselves, all the sons of men be unrighteous and unholie, yet even in this life all the Israel of God in Christ Jesus are fitly and truly called saints, in such sort as hath been said.

Vain, then, and foolish is their conceit that imagine that there are no saints but such as have departed this mortality in the fear and faith of Christ Jesus. They, indeed, are well called saints, and holy is the remembrance of them, neither need they the shrines of a sinful deceiver to be called saints. But not unto them alone, but unto you also, beloved, is this title due, to be called saints, if ye be in Christ Jesus, and walk worthy of that calling whereunto he hath called you. Walk, therefore, worthy of that calling whereunto ye are called. Mortify the deeds of the flesh,

and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Be ye filled with the fruits of righteousness, and be ye holy in all manner of conversation, as he which hath called you is holy. The greater impossibility that there is in it to be perfectly holy, strive ye the more earnestly after it; and howsoever ye come short, yet with all eagerness endeavour still yourselves unto that which is before, and follow hard toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is the practice, and this is the study of them that are sanctified by the Spirit of God; and these things if ye think on, and do, ye are saints in Christ Jesus. Otherwiso ye are no saints, neither do ye belong unto the covenant of grace. And this know for a surety, that whosoever are not saints on earth shall never be saints in heaven. As, therefore, ye desire in your souls there to be, so study, and give all diligence here to be. Be ye in Christ Jesus, and then ye are saints; be ye saints, and then ye are in Christ Jesus.

The brethren. Having remembered his own salutations, now he addeth also the salutations of others unto the Philippians. And first he remembereth the greetings and salutations of the brethren unto the Philippians. ‘The brethren,’ &c.; where by the brethren which were with him, he understandeth those that laboured with him in the gospel.

Whence I observe, that in letters sent unto men absent, these forms of speeches have not been unusual or misliked, to say, The brethren salute thee, or, salute the brethren. ‘All the brethren,’ saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xvi. 20, ‘greet you.’ And again, Col. iv. 15, ‘Salute the brethren,’ &c.

The more is it to be wondered at, that such forms of speech should now be censured, and they that use them, noted and traduced for such and such men. Can any man follow a better pattern than the example of the apostle? Or can any man have a better warrant than the warrant of the apostle? It may very well be thought, that if Paul were now living, and should now use such forms of salutations as these in the end of his letters and epistles, he should so be censured and traduced as now those are that therein follow his example.

The second thing which hence I observe is, that as all Christians generally, so all ministers of the gospel in particular, should write, and speak unto, and account one of another as brethren. For, as this is true in general, that we have all one God for our Father, that we are all begotten by the immortal seed of one God, in one womb of the church, that we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, that we are all adopted unto the same inheritance by the same Spirit, through Jesus Christ, and therefore are all brethren in Christ Jesus, so is it also true in all the ministers of the gospel of Christ Jesus, that we all build the same house, we all preach the same gospel, we are all called to the dis-

pensation of the same mysteries, we all seek the glory of the same kingdom, and we are all shepherds and bishops under the chief shepherd and bishop of our souls, Christ Jesus. Howsoever, therefore, in degree we go one before another, yet should we use and entreat one another as brethren.

A good note, as for all Christians in general, so for such in the ministry as in gifts, or degree, are before others of their calling. A better example than this of the apostle they cannot follow, to be so affectioned towards their inferiors, as it appeareth our apostle was, and in all kindness to entreat as brethren them that labour with them in the gospel, as it appeareth our apostle did. It followeth,

‘*All the saints*,’ &c. Hero he remembereth the salutations of all the rest of the saints that were at Rome unto them. ‘All the saints salute you,’ to wit, all the rest of the saints, that labour not in the gospel, ‘and most of all, they which are of Caesar’s household;’ he understandeth some of Nero’s court which did embrace the truth. Which salutation the apostle, no doubt, addeth for the joy and comfort of the Philippians, that when they should hear that not only all the saints at Rome saluted them, but that some of the emperor’s court which had embraced the truth saluted them, yea, and were as forward as the best in saluting them. Whence I observe, that the Lord in mercy sometimes, in the courts of wicked princes, raiseth up faithful children unto Abraham, and causeth his truth to be loved and embrased, and professed even of their courtiers. What a cruel tyrant, and wicked persecutor of Christians Nero was, the ecclesiastical stories mention. He was the beginner of all those wicked persecutions under those ten cruel tyrants in the primitive church, and grew to such a thirsting after blood, that not only Paul, and Peter, and many other Christians, but his greatest familiars, his dearest friends, his nearest kindred, his brethren, his mother, his wife, were slain by his most cruel tyranny. Yet even in this cruel tyrant’s court, the Lord had some that feared him, and favoured the truth. Such a one was Joseph in Pharaoh his court, Jonathan in Saul’s court, Obadiah in Ahab’s court, and Ebed-melech in Zedekiah’s court. And such is his mercy that he will, such is his power that he can, and such his goodness that he doth, cause light to shine out of darkness, and beget children in the faith, where the truth is most oppugned.

Which may teach us many good lessons. As first, not to despair, but that where the truth is most oppugned, there the Lord hath some that fear him, and worship him in truth. No place more unlike to have friends unto the truth, than Nero his court, and yet there were such. And therefore we may hope that even there where antichrist usurpeth his tyranny, the Lord hath his children which bow not the knee to Baal. Only we are to acknowledge the glorious mercy and power of the Lord therein, that so wonder-

fully dealeth for his children, and provideth for his own glory.

Secondly, this may serve to condemn us of great backwardness in a Christian resolution of a religious profession. In Nero his court was great danger of present death and cruel torture unto so many as should embrace and profess the truth of Christ Jesus. There the same Paul in prison, and many continually butchered and killed for a good profession; yet there were such as embraced the truth in their hearts, and professed it with their mouths. And how shall not this condemn our irresolute resolution of a religious profession? We are in no peril of death, or of bonds, or imprisonment, for making a bold profession of Christian religion. Nay, it is our honour with our most gracious prince constantly to maintain the truth against error and superstition. And yet so cold are we, a great many of us, in religion, as that a man cannot tell what we are, papists or protestants; and so frozen, as that a man would take a many of us rather to be enemies than friends unto religion. Either we are afraid and dare not make that profession which we should, for fear of a day; or else to serve the time, we make show of one, and are indeed another, and so cannot make a good profession. Howsoever it be, so it is, that many of us are of no resolution in religion. Well, it should not be so; but though we were in Nero his court, we should make a good profession; and though there were no way for us but to be cast into the hot fiery furnace, yet should we with the three children, Dan iii. 18, protest, 'We will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast made and set up.'

'The grace,' &c. In these words the apostle shutteth up all, and, as it were, sealeth his letter with that usual prayer which he useth both in the beginning and in the end almost of all his epistles. Where ye see the thing which he wisheth them is grace, which when he calleth 'the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ,' he herein noteth whence it is derived unto his children. By grace, he understandeth both the first and the second grace, both the free favour of God, which is the fountain of all good things, and the good things themselves which flow from that fountain. Now this is called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, because it is derived from God by him unto his children; by him, I say, even by our Lord, unto whom all power is given both in heaven and in earth; by our Lord Jesus, that saveth his people from their sins; by our Lord Jesus Christ, anointed a king to defend us, a prophet to teach us, a priest to offer up a sacrifice for our sins. So that the apostle's prayer here for the Philippians is, ye see, that whatsoever grace our Lord Jesus hath purchased for his church, may be with them all, to fill them with all goodness.

Would ye, then, know how to pray for all good, either unto God's church, or any of God's children? Learn of our apostle, and pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with them. For herein ye pray both for all spiritual grace in heavenly things unto them, and for all temporal blessings which in his gracious favour he vouchsafeth for the good of his church and children, being all couched in this, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Again, would ye know by whom all grace is derived unto us, be it spiritual grace or temporal blessing, the grace of God whereby he loveth us, or the grace of God whereby his love is made known unto us? Learn of our apostle, it is by our Lord Jesus Christ; for therefore is it called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, because it is derived by him unto us, he having reconciled us unto God, and we with him having all things given unto us. Knowing, then, the exceeding great riches that we have in Christ Jesus our Lord, let us always in all things glorify the name of Christ Jesus; and as by him we have all things, so let us do all things to his glory.

LAUS OMNIS SOLI DEO.

FINIS.

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CARTWRIGHT
ON THE
EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

A COMMENTARY UPON THE EPISTLE OF ST PAUL WRITTEN TO THE COLOSSIANS.

PREACHED BY
THOMAS CARTWRIGHT, B.D.,

AND NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FURTHER USE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.'—COL. iii. 16.

EDINBURGH : JAMES NICHOL.
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M.DCCC.LXIV.

THOMAS CARTWRIGHT, B.D.

IT were out of all proportion to prefix an elaborate 'Life' of the great Puritan and Reformer—THOMAS CARTWRIGHT—to so very small a portion of his Writings as this reprint of his posthumous 'Commentary' on Colossians. His is a name that belongs to History, and by the verdict even of adversaries, one whose lustre can never fade. Says the candid and well-informed, Marsden, 'Thomas Cartwright is one of the few men whose life and personal character still interest posterity, after a lapse of nearly three hundred years;' and again, 'He attached too much importance to his peculiar opinions of church discipline, and these opinions, we conceive, were often wrong; and in the early years of his public life he was not free from the universal vices of his times,—intemperance and personality in controversy. But as age mellowed and persecution broke down his spirit, a noble love of truth, a generous and forgiving temper, a contempt of suffering, and a fervent piety to God, break out with increasing lustre; and while LEARNING, ELOQUENCE, AND HIGH TALENTS, associated with exalted religious principles, and these displayed with consistency through a long life of persecution, shall continue to be revered, THE NAME OF CARTWRIGHT WILL BE UTTERED BY GOOD MEN OF EVERY PARTY WITH PROFOUND RESPECT.*

All the less is a large 'Life' here called for, in that Benjamin Brook, with characteristic laboriousness and honesty, if with equally characteristic lack of skill effectively to use his materials, has written a 'Memoir' of 'The Life and Writings of Thomas Cartwright, B.D., the distinguished Puritan Reformer: including the principal Ecclesiastical Movements in the reign of Queen Elizabeth,' which fills a somewhat bulky octavo;† not to speak of the ample space which every Historian, whatever be his own opinions, feels constrained to assign to a man so outstandingly prominent in an age of giants.

To these authorities, therefore, agreeably to the enumeration below, the reader desirous of fuller information is referred:‡ and meantime a brief and impartial sketch, giving the

* The History of the Early Puritans: from the Reformation to the Opening of the Civil War in 1642. By J. B. Marsden, M.A. 1853. 1 vol. 8vo, pages 71, 181. The companion volume of the 'Later Puritans' is of like value and interest.

† One vol. 8vo, 1845, pp. vi, 489.

‡ For convenience of after reference, the following list of authorities is given here, alphabetically arranged:—
Baker MS., as cited in Cooper's 'ATHENÆ.' (See under Cooper).

Bancroft's Dangerous Positions and Proceedings, published under the pretence of Reformation for the Presbyterial Discipline, 1595, 4to.

... Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline, 1593, 4to.

Baxter's Christian Directory, folio, 1678, 2d edition.
... Reliquiae Baxterianæ, by Sylvester, folio, 1696.
Blackburn's Works, 7 vols. 8vo, 1804.
Brook's 'Memoir,' as above.

... Lives of the Puritans, 3 vols. 8vo, 1813.
Churton's Life of Nowell, 1 vol. 8vo, 1809.

Clarke's Lives of Thirty-two English Divines, folio, 1677.
Cooper's Athenæ Cantabrigienses, vol. ii. 1586–1609, 1861.

The 'Atheneæ' is an indispensable book to the historical student: and it is to be hoped that Messrs Cooper will soon complete their onerous but most unostentatious labours.

Dugdale's Antiquities of Warwickshire, 2 vols. folio, 1730.
Fuller's Church History, edited by Brewer.

... Worthies (Hertfordshire), by Nuttall. (Over)

results of personal research and of consultation of all accessible authorities—of the leading facts, and incidents, and opinions of a grand if stormy, a sorrowful but heroic and noble Life,—may be acceptable.

Our THOMAS CARTWRIGHT—who must not be confounded either with his own son and namesake of Brentwood, in Essex, nor with his grandson and namesake, the Bishop of Chester—was a native of Hertfordshire, the ‘garden of England for delight,’ according to Thomas Fuller, who, with loving words, places him among its ‘Worthies.’* His birth-place has not been discovered; neither with certainty his birth-date. ‘About 1535’ is the usual form in the biographies, and his alleged age at death, in 1603, viz., sixty-eight, agrees therewith. But as the *Athenæ Cantabrigienses* informs us that he was matriculated as a sizar of Clare Hall, Cambridge, in November 1547,† it is probable that ‘about’ covers at least three years earlier. Contemporaries, indeed, entered the University at the precocious age of twelve, and even under; but the fifteenth year of his age is the understood period of his entrance, which would make his birth-year 1532.‡

Hertfordshire still holds among its ‘rooky woods’ and sunny slopes not a few memorials of ‘good families,’ in the numerous ‘places, halls, courts, and manors,’ of which, earlier, its

Fuller's History of the University of Cambridge, by Prickett and Wright.

Grindall's Remains, edited by Nicholsons (Parker Society). Hawthorne's ‘Our Old Home,’ 2 vols. cr. 8vo. Nothing could exceed the descriptions of out-of-the-way old-mannered places and folks in this delightful book. We forgive the occasional vulgarities and prejudices for the sake of the fine amber in which these ‘dead flies’ occur.

Hallam's Constitutional History of England, from the Accession of Henry VIII. to the death of George II., 3 vols. 8vo. (2d edition, 1829).

Hanbury's Life of Cartwright, prefixed to his edition of Hooker's Works, 1831.

... Historical Memorials relating to the Independents, 3 vols. 8vo, 1844.

Haweli's Sketches of the Reformation.

Heylin's Aerius Redivivus; or the History of the Presbyterians from 1636 to 1647, folio, 1670, 2d edit.

Hopkins (Samuel), The Puritans; or The Church, Court, and Parliament of England during the Reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth. Boston, U. S., 3 vols. 8vo, 1859–1861. Incomparably the best History of Puritanism: minute, careful, effective.

Leigh's Treatise of Religion and Learning. MSS. Lansdowne, vol. xxix.

Marsden, as above.

Maskell's Marprelate Controversy, 1 vol. 8vo, 1845.

Middleton's Evangelical Biography, vol. ii., 4 vols. 8vo, 1816.

Neal's History of the Puritans, edition 3 vols. 8vo, 1827 (Tegg).

Paule's (Sir George) Life of Whitgift, 1612, 4to. A mere panegyrist.

Price's History of Protestant Nonconformity in England, 2 vols. 8vo, 1838.

Perry's History of the Church of England from the Death of Elizabeth to the Present Time, vol. i., 1861.

Seame's Elizabethan Religious History, 1 vol. 8vo, 1839.

Steven's History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam: to which are subjoined Notices of the other British Churches in the Netherlands, 1 vol. 8vo, 1833.

Strype, Annals, 7 vols. 8vo. Oxford, 1824. ‘Lives’ of Parker, Grindall, Aylmer, and Whitgift.

Taylor's Romantic Biography of the Age of Elizabeth, vol. ii. 1842.

Walton's Life of Hooker, prefixed to Keble's edition of Hooker, 3 vols. 8vo, 1841; and the Works of Hooker, 3 vols. 8vo, 1841.

Whitgift's Works, edition by Ayre (Parker Society), 3 vols. 8vo.

Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ed. by Bliss, 4 vols. 4to, 1815. Zurich ‘Letters,’ by Parker Society, Vol. I.

In our references, only the name and page will be given, unless where mistake were likely.

* ‘Worthies,’ vol. ii. page 37. It may be noted that the tractates placed by Watt in the Bib. Britt., and by that indefatigable copyist of all his blunders, Allibone, under another Thomas C., belong to the Bishop of Chester.

† Vol. ii. page 360. Brook makes no mention of Clare Hall, but of St John's, in his fifteenth year, as above.

‡ We gladly add here an obliging communication from C. H. Cooper, Esq., in relation to this and other points—which will confirm his own account in the *Athenæ*: ‘In the sixteenth century, scholars were usually admitted at the university at twelve years old, and even earlier. See several “Notes” on this subject in recent numbers [1864] of “Notes and Queries.” That Thomas Cartwright, the great Puritan, was the person matriculated at Clare Hall in November 1547, is to me perfectly clear. Sizar betokens humble means, undoubtedly. His parents were not wealthy. The Registers of Admissions at Clare Hall of that date do not exist. I derive the fact from his matriculation in the books of the University. He was probably admitted at Clare Hall before July 1547, as matriculation as a member of the University follows admission as a member of a particular college. The academical year counts from July. I suppose he went out B.A. at the end of January 1550–1, a few months after he became scholar of St John's, but it may have been January 1551–2. My authority for his admission as a scholar of St John's, 5th November 1547, is the College Register of admissions of fellows, scholars, and officers.—See *Athenæ Cantab.* ii. 553.’

quaint historian already cited, and, later, its most illustrious son, William Cowper, in many a pleasant quip in his peerless Letters, tells; and the probabilities seem that Master Thomas was sprung of one of these, although cradled in humbler state. At any rate, his parents and immediate ancestry were possessed of considerable means. We find him in after years *inheriting* an estate at Whaddon in Cambridgeshire, transmitted from his father and grandfather, while on parting with it he is known to have purchased another, and that a 'good one,' elsewhere. The portrait of Cartwright, even through the rude lines of a not very skilful graver, presents the cultured and commanding lineaments of a 'blue blood' descent, whatever the outward circumstances may have been temporarily.* His entrance as a 'sizar' seems to betoken straits somehow.

Entering Clare Hall in 1547, he, the great champion of Protestantism against Popery, and the annihilator for England of the Rhemish 'New Testament,' must have had as a fellow-student there, though his senior, Thomas Baily, subsequently D.D., and celebrated as Regent, in the absence of Cardinal Allen, of the English College at Douay and Rheims; and also when he had migrated to St John's College, he must have been associated with Richard Hall, D.D., equally celebrated at Douay and St Omer.

At Clare Hall he, in all likelihood, was first incited to those Hebrew acquirements for which he was destined to be so distinguished, inasmuch as Christopher Carlile, an eminent Hebraist, was then a Fellow and tutor in it. The only other name of mark contemporary with the young sizar was Arthur Yeldart, afterwards so renowned at Oxford, and who was admitted sizar like himself at Clare Hall, about three years previously.†

From Clare Hall he removed to St John's College, where he was admitted a scholar on 5th November 1550. It is pleasant to learn that the then Master of this College, who was at the same time Vice-Chancellor of the University, was Dr William Bill, a native of Hertfordshire, a circumstance that may have had something to do with his migration from Clare Hall.‡ Thomas Lever, the fearless and saintly Reformer, became, on the transference of Bill to Trinity, his tutor. In 1548, Lever and Roger Hutchinson held their memorable debate on the Mass at St John's, at which Cartwright was probably present.§

In both Colleges he pursued his studies with avidity, never allowing himself—very stupidly, and to his physical cost ultimately,—more than five hours' sleep, a rule to which it is said he adhered throughout his life.||

These studies were prosecuted under the good young king Edward VI.; but on the premature death of this lamented monarch, Mary, 'The Bloody,' succeeded, which led to the retirement, for conscience' sake, of Lever, and all the loyal adherents to The Reformation in his College, including twenty-four Fellows, with other scholars, of the latter of whom young Cartwright was one.¶ During the dark and disastrous reign of this unwomanly woman and most unregal sovereign, our student was 'entered' as a 'clerk' in the office of a counsellor-at-law, wherein he gained no inconsiderable legal knowledge, by which, in his after Controversies, he was enabled 'to fence the better for himself.'** Upon the accession of Elizabeth, 'good men' breathed again; the Reformers who had fled from persecution abroad, returned

* It 'adorns' Clarke's Lives.

† Consult Cooper's *Athenæ*, under Baily, Hall, Carlile, and Yeldart.

‡ Cf. *ibid.* We do not forget after controversies in which the good name of Bill was involved, but these were long after.

§ Cf. *ibid.* under Lever and Hutchinson.

|| We find this transmitted from biographer to biographer.

Hopkins (vol. iii. page 351) quotes as from the 'Publisher's Preface' to the 'Confutation' of the 'Rhemish New Testament,' to the effect that it was while he was engaged upon it only that he so over-toiled himself. But there is no such statement in the 'Publisher's Preface,' nor any reference at all to the fact, therein.

¶ Baker MSS. vol. i. pp. 149, 150 (Brook).

** Fuller, 'Worthies,' p. 54.

home, and the secluded came forth from their involuntary seclusion. Dr James Pilkington was appointed 'Master' of St John's College; and he having formed the acquaintance of Cartwright, again introduced him to his college,—a kindness for which this wise and inestimable man, so well known as Bishop of Durham, has been reviled as a 'zealous Puritan, out of whose school proceeded Cartwright and others.'* Here he had as tutor Dudley Fenner, one of the foremost ornaments of the University. On 6th April 1560, he was admitted a fellow of his College, on the Lady Margaret's foundation. But again he made a change, viz., to Trinity, the princely rival of St John's, where, in the same year, he became a minor fellow, and commenced M.A.† It would seem that he kept up his relations to both Colleges, for he was appointed junior dean of St John's on 10th January 1561–2, and about April 1562 became a major fellow of Trinity, being in or before 1564 elected one of the senior fellows of that society. In 1564, Queen Elizabeth visited the University, when a magnificent reception was accorded to her, and the principal 'scholars' of the different Colleges were selected for the 'public disputations'—an old usage—in her presence. Of these, Cartwright was chosen to fill a leading part; and he must have acquitted himself well, seeing he received, along with the others, high commendation, although Her Majesty shewed her preference for a Thomas Preston, who excelled in 'properousness of person,' and those 'lighter elegances' for which the Queen—then a fair young lady—had a quick eye. That our 'scholar' is slandered to have taken offence from the preference, even though of the sort indicated, and thereby to have been impelled to his Puritanism, is a sample of the shifts to which, even in calumny, his opponents have resorted. Says Marsden: 'It would be an amusing, were it not a painful, instance of the asperity of Cartwright's opponents, that to this trivial circumstance (and yet one so natural to a young and accomplished lady) they have ascribed, without pretending further evidence, his estrangement for the remainder of his life from the church party. He became a puritan to avenge himself on Doctor Preston!'‡

By this time, so rapidly had his reputation grown, when he appeared at Great St Mary's as the Preacher, the windows were taken out, to enable the crowds who could not get into the vast church, but who willingly stood outside, to hear.§

About this period he visited Ireland, continuing there about a year. He must have left a favourable impression of his worth and learning behind him, for subsequently the Irish Primate, Loftus, pressed the Government to appoint him to the vacant See of Armagh.|| This was on 5th December 1567, in which year he proceeded B.D. In 1569 he was elected Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity; and it was this appointment that gave direction and colour to his whole after-history, and in that to the whole after-history of England ecclesiastically regarded.

On entering upon his duties, he selected for the subject of his Lectures the 1st and 2d chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. His prelections created the profoundest interest, and were listened to with growing admiration. In these he gave an exposition of what he, as a scholar and divine, considered was 'written'; and his conclusions clashed with the High Church notions of the exclusively 'divine authority' of Episcopacy. He shewed without concealment what he considered to be the departures from apostolic times. Vehement was

* Quoted by Marsden, page 72.

† Throughout, Cooper's *Athenæ* is our authority for degrees and other University dates. See letter to myself *ante*.

‡ As before, page 72. Soames very childishly reasons upon the probability of the thing from the constitution of

human nature. That is beside the question. It has not the shadow of authority as fact. See Soames, page 143. Read also Price's pungent reprimand, vol. ii. page 215.

§ Cooper's *Athenæ*, page 360.

|| *Ibid.*

the outcry. Complaints containing the most exaggerated statements of his ‘teaching’ were made to the Chancellor, Sir William Cecil; and though the astute and venerable statesman enjoined silence on all, and mutual forbearance, the excitement was kept up; nor did it cease until Dr John Whitgift, who had succeeded Dr May as Vice-Chancellor, prohibited Cartwright from lecturing at all,—this very Dr Whitgift having himself shared earlier all the professor’s scruples, and added his own signature to a petition for redress!

The incident is historical, and demands a full statement. The letter of Cecil is remarkable. Having considered the affair, he says, ‘With much deliberation and meekness,’ his conclusion was that Cartwright, ‘not of any arrogance or intention to move troubles, but as the reader of the Scripture,’ had given ‘notes by way of comparison between the order of the ministry in the times of the apostles and the present times in this Church of England.’ He therefore thought it sufficient ‘to charge Mr Cartwright not to deal any further in these kind of questions in his readings, or sermons, or otherwise, *until some order may be taken therein this Michaelmas term*, upon more commodity of conference meet for such a matter,’ and adds, ‘whereto he hath accorded.’* He also wrote to Cartwright himself a kind letter of caution and advice.

The Professor’s own account, witnessed by hundreds of the University who heard his ‘lectures,’ was precisely in accord with the Chancellor’s impression. The following was his appeal to him, turned into English from the original Latin:—

‘RIGHT HONOURABLE—Since you are the common patron and defender of literary men of every nation, I entertain a pleasing hope that I also may share in your kind attention. Since many learned men have both experienced and openly proclaimed your remarkable benevolence, I pray let me also, who am not quite a stranger to literature, be a partaker. To my great unhappiness I know the truth of the proverb, “Nothing flies faster than calumny;” nothing is more quickly raised, or spread with greater facility. If the calumny which has been raised within the walls of the university had not been carried to the house and the ears of our most worthy chancellor, my grief had not been so great; but I confess it cuts me to the heart to be represented to your excellency as a vile person, yea, as an enemy. I may truly declare that, if some persons were not now absent, there would be no necessity for me to attempt to vindicate myself to your excellency.

‘As you allow me to speak freely, I solemnly assure you I have been most *scrupulously adverse from strife and contention*. *I have taught nothing which did not naturally arise from the passage on which I was lecturing*; yea, when occasions of speaking on the habits have come in my way, I have ever avoided them. *But I do not deny that I have said our ministry has deviated from that of the primitive and apostolic church, to the purity of which I wished ours to be conformed*: but this I said in so candid and modest a way, that none but ignorant or malicious persons could find fault. Yet I hear that I am accused to your excellency.

‘If you ask, how I can prove this? see, most noble sir, I bring the testimony of many most unexceptional witnesses who were present. Little can, indeed, be wanting to prove my innocence; as I can bring almost the *whole university* to witness for me. For if the vice-chancellor had not refused to call a congregation, when I requested him to do it, there is no doubt that I should have been perfectly freed from the calumny which has been raised against me.

‘I cannot in a letter repeat verbatim all that was said in the lecture concerning which such rumours have been raised. But I most religiously promise, I will not conceal anything if you wish to be acquainted with it; and, as I do not refuse correction, if I have committed any error, so I justly implore your protection in this affair. Do not, therefore, O most honourable sir, suffer the enmity of certain men to oppress me, or rather to injure the truth itself: men who seek to indulge their private enmity against me, under pretence of promoting the interests of peace and of the church. May the Lord Jesus Christ, by his Holy Spirit, duly increase your excellency’s wisdom and piety.’†

The offender was too influential to be left alone in his ‘trouble.’ The most eminent members of the University stood nobly forward in his behalf. It does one good to read the old generous words:—

* Brook from Strype, pages 62, 63. Cf. also Marsden, and all the authorities.

† Brook from Strype, pp. 56, 57.

'It has been reported,' says a 'testimonial,' signed by fifteen persons, all celebrated men, and members of the University, 'that Mr Cartwright is greatly disliked here; that in his office, as professor of theology, he first threw about sparks of discord, which afterwards increased into a flame; and that he prides himself beyond all bounds, in controversies concerning the ministry and the habits. But we, whose names are hereunto subscribed, who were present at those lectures from which this rumour arose, do testify that we never heard anything from which strife and discord has arisen. He did not, indeed, touch the controversy concerning the habits; but he mentioned something about the ministry, to which rule he wished that ours might be conformed; but he did this with that caution and modesty which ought to have secured him from the calumny which is spread abroad.'*

Nor was this all: at the same time another 'testimonial,'—subscribed by eighteen celebrated members of the University, some of whom were subsequently bishops,—was presented. Very memorable are its statements to the learning and character of Cartwright, and the absolute falsehood of the charges brought against him.

Upon these powerful applications the Chancellor interposed, as we have already seen, and gave orders for Cartwright's restoration, to the great joy of the University; but even Cecil's authority failed to gain the end. Again, therefore, a 'petition' was sent up, subscribed by twenty-two members of the University, who respectfully, but firmly, claimed the restoration of Cartwright, not as an act of favour to him, but as a matter of right to him and to the University.

In forming a judgment as to the rightness or wrongness of Cartwright's position in this matter, we have nothing to do with the correctness or incorrectness of the views which he derived from Scripture as to the Christian ministry. It is enough that he held them conscientiously and sincerely; and that neither he, nor any divines of note among his contemporaries, regarded the Reformation as complete, when Elizabeth chose to pronounce that it should proceed no further. The very men who opposed him and oppressed him, the Grindals and the Whitgifts, held substantially the same opinions; but they were willing that the Scripture should be interpreted only according to the dictation of Elizabeth; and Cartwright was not willing. If liberty of speech was not to be a crime, and faithful, scholarly exposition of Holy Scripture a snare; if the whims of the sovereign, as ignorant as they were capricious, were not to be servilely obeyed as prerogative, and prerogative placed on a level with the Word of God, Thomas Cartwright was not in a tittle blameworthy.

It is evident, however, that the counsels of his adversaries were in the ascendant in the University. On 29th June 1570,—the very day on which Cecil's letter to the vice-chancellor was read in the Regent House,—a grace was proposed for Cartwright's admission to the degree of D.D. It was violently opposed; and to the shame of the opposers, not the opposed, successfully stayed. On 11th December 1570, he was finally deprived of his professorship; and in September 1571, of his fellowship at Trinity.

This last deprivation was put on the extraordinary ground that, not being 'in priest's orders,' he had 'perjured himself' by 'preaching,'—the sorriest of pretexts! For, as the deprived 'fellow' shewed, he was in 'deacon's orders,' and thus was a 'spiritual man,' in contradistinction, as alone the statute intended, to those of the other professions, law and physic. Churchmen, equally with Nonconformists, have ratified the defence, and condemned the severity of Whitgift.† Thus pungently and forcibly did Cartwright afterwards vindicate himself. He was 'accused diversely of unbrotherhood, unfaithfulness, want of good will,' and all 'made heinous by circumstance of perjury and unthankfulness.' He takes up the charges thus put, and says: 'Wherein I will not answer, that I used not you as

* *Ibid.* p. 58.

† See the whole question of 'deacon' = priest's orders

well handled in Price, Vol. i. pp. 219, 220; also Marsden, pp. 79, 80.

Master, because you used not me as fellow; but ask you, wherein this breach of duty consisteth? If I owe you fidelity, I owe it more unto the Lord; if good will, the truth must be preferred; if the Master of Trinity College be a friend, the truth is more; if you a brother, the truth ought to be brother, sister, mother, and all. Against what part of true fidelity is it, to reprove him openly by writing, which had openly by writing spoken evil of that which I was, and am persuaded to be, the everlasting truth of God, and reviled those that maintained it? Against what point of good-will, to have shewed him the way, whom I judged to be out; to light him a candle, whom I saw in this point to grope in darkness? And if I did it sharper than your taste can like of, besides that bitter things are often wholesomer than sweet, you should not think much to be stricken with the back of the sword which has smitten others with the edge; nor to be lightly pricked with some impair of your credit, which have thrust others through, in taking from them, so much as lay in you, all opinion both of godliness and learning. You doubt whether I meant good faith, when I called you a brother: take heed lest, in giving no credit unto others, you leave no place for others to give any unto you.'*

Thus 'outed' from all his offices, Cartwright proceeded,—not without finding aid in his noble poverty; a poverty that Conformity and time-serving would have turned into splendour,—to Geneva, where he formed a close friendship with Theodore Beza, the coadjutor and successor of John Calvin, and others of the Reformers and Divines. He remained abroad until 1571–2. At the earnest request of his home-friends, among whom were Fox, and the learned Fulke, then like himself, and for a similar cause, deprived of his fellowship, but afterwards master of Pembroke Hall, he returned to England within a year. He arrived to find the memorable 'Admonition to Parliament' rapidly passing through successive editions, and its authors, the holy Wilcox and the meek Field, 'in Newgate.' He read the book, and visited the prisoners, and was fired to the very depths of his fervid soul by the wrong doing of those 'in authority.' He had much to lose. He was in favour in the Cabinet. Cecil, Lord Burghley, solicited his opinion upon an affair of state, which was a tribute at once to his character and head. The queen contemplated, or pretended, in her interminable way, to contemplate marriage with the Duke of Anjou, a papist, and the Lord Treasurer himself was thought to favour the match. The question he proposed was this: 'Whether it was lawful for one professing the gospel to marry a papist?' Cartwright's answer was articulate and unhesitant: 'I am fully persuaded, for my part, that it is directly forbidden in Scripture.' Happily for the nation the marriage was broken off.†

A 'Second Admonition' soon followed the first, reiterating the needful reforms, and fearlessly shewing how they might and ought to be gone about. The title was itself a casting down of the gage: 'A Second Admonition, with an Humble Petition to both Houses of Parliament, for *Relief against Subscription*', and it took the high ground that the 'subscription' had 'no foundation in law, but was an act of *sovereignty in the crown*'.‡

Whitgift, Cartwright's old opponent, replied to the first 'Admonition,' adding a few disdainful words toward the close concerning the 'second.' But disdain would not do. Another man than the gentle, 'scrupulous' Puritan friends was in the field. Cartwright's reply was fierce and terrible, and was greeted with general applause. Again, therefore, Whitgift, in secret conclave at Lambeth, buckled on his armour, and that Controversy ensued which is a living part of the History of England,—a controversy that culminated on

* 'Second Reply,' Epistle, p. 12.

† Marsden, pp. 80, 81.

‡ As next best to reading the 'Admonitions' them-

selves, read the masterly chapter upon them in Hopkins
Vol. i. pp. 437–466.

the side of The Church in the great book of Richard Hooker; and on the other in the laying-down, broad-based, of that civil and religious liberty which, though it was at first called only 'Toleration,' has proved better and grander than its name.

It were out of the question to discuss the *merits* on either side at any length in this brief Memoir. The sum and substance of difference between the two was this: Cartwright maintained that The Bible was the only standard of doctrine, of discipline, and of government for the Church. Whitgift averred that it was not a standard of Church discipline and government; that these are changeable, and may be accommodated to the civil government under which we live; that the apostolical government was for the Church in its infancy, and under persecution. And therefore, instead of reducing the external policy of the Church to the simplicity of the Scripture model, he embraced in his standard the opinions and customs of the Fathers in the first four centuries after Christ.

It may be noticed that it was in reference to this appeal beyond the Bible to the fathers, that a Romish priest afterwards said to Sir Francis Knollys, and justly, that he would require no better book to prove his doctrine of Popery than Whitgift's against Cartwright. Which of the two Conformities was the worthier, to the fathers or to the holy Scriptures, to the example of the apostles or to the mandate, born of pique and jealousy, of the sovereign, it is not hard to determine, unless we are to prove recreant to our hardly achieved Protestantism, unless we are to erase the watchword given us by William Chillingworth, 'The Bible, and the Bible alone, the religion of Protestants.'

The most cursory examination of the numerous tractates reveals that what Cartwright wrote were no mere opinions, loosely held, and readily departed from, but convictions of his innermost heart; while it is difficult to get over a feeling that his opponent is not equally disinterested.

The 'Admonition' controversy is of much interest to even a nineteenth century reader. The ability of each disputant is marked. Whitgift proves himself, beyond all gainsaying, to have been possessed of much acumen, of quick, ready, effective dialectic, and a marvellous fecundity of words, answering a sentence with a tractate, and a tractate with a huge folio. But when you come to look at all beneath the surface, and the over-loaded margins, you discover a lack of ingenuousness, an ostentatious display of reading which was scattered rather than wide, and his opinions a mere echo of the likings and mislikings of his royal mistress, while his passion is rather petulance than 'noble rage.' It is impossible to condemn too emphatically his insinuations of political crime against his opponent, especially when these were addressed to ears so jealously vigilant as were Elizabeth's; nor is any reprobation too strong of his cruel naming of him 'Anabaptist,' a name which he well knew the atrocities of Munster had made, not an opprobrium merely, but a terror.*

Cartwright has astonishing force and ardour, and full learning, and there is a touch of the ludicrous in the way in which he comes down with his mighty blows upon the poor thin gatherings of 'learned' opinions by his opponent, such blows as reduce them to dust as impalpable as that which has long gathered in old libraries upon the old tomes of both sides. Henry Taylor, writing of another, has finely described the great Puritan's attitude throughout:—

'There where I stand in presence of my King,
There stand I, too, in presence of my God.'†

* Cf. Hopkins, Vol. i. pp. 447, 448. Price, Vol. i., pages 235, 236. In the latter will be found Cartwright's indig-

nant repudiation of the name 'anabaptist.' 'Brook's Puritans,' Vol. i. page 321.

† St Clement's Eve, i. sc. i. page 6.

As a true Englishman he loved his country; and his own great soul recognised all the great qualities in his queen; as a true Churchman, also, he loved his Church too well not to look upon 'separation' as something dreadful;* and there are very tender yearnings toward the most vehement of his persecutors. He is compelled to unmask the hollow professions that are made to him and his, but he does it very forbearingly. You seem to hear Isolande speaking:—

'Shame it is to hear you speak of love,
And shame it is to answer you with tears,
That seem like softness.'†

Apart from the *principles* of the Controversy,—which open up interests of the deepest and most vital kind in the government of the Church, and in the conserving of which Cartwright, as we think, goes far beyond his own intentions, even to self-contradiction, and to the peril of those liberties he so nobly contended for, inasmuch as practically he seems to advocate the subjection of the State to the Church,‡—as in the case of Andrew Marvell, it richly rewards to study its literature. There are choice morsels for one's common-place book, clever asides, and amusing minatory and recriminatory bits, e.g. Whitgift, who was intensely choleric himself, retorts upon Cartwright, 'What you think of those monthly and long-laboured sermons it skilleth not much, *for you are in a heat*, which hindereth true judgment.' Finding§ himself in a difficulty, there is a dexterous but very ignoble appeal to imperial authority. Take one: Cartwright has been exposing the acknowledged abuses of the Court of Faculties, against which the nation was crying out. It is inconvenient to agree, and hence we read: 'This is a matter of policy, and therefore I leave the further consideration of it to such as God hath committed the government of this realm unto, to whom it doth especially appertain.'|| The final 'Reply' of the series was from Cartwright, which it is needful to state, as Fuller has spent much ingenuity in accounting for the puritan's allowing Whitgift the 'last word,' The last 'Defence,' furtively printed, as indeed were all the 'Replies,' and written under many disadvantages, is masterly, and went unanswered, a fact that condemns Whitgift on his own shewing; for in addressing Cartwright, he had said, 'I take that as granted which is not answered.'¶ It were too much to press the words against the bishop; but there surely can be little doubt that, spite of his huge folio and its attendant tractates, he was conscious of failure, seeing that he it was who engaged Hooker to produce his immortal book, a book prized by the intelligent and cultured Nonconformist equally with the High Churchman. The gentle and beautiful words of the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity' may fitly close our notice of this Controversy: 'Concerning the defender of which Admonitions, all that I mean to say is but this, there will come a time when three words uttered with charity or meekness shall receive a far more blessed reward than three thousand volumes written with disdainful sharpness of wit. But the manner of men's writing must not alienate our hearts from the truth, if it appear they have the truth, as the followers of the same defender do think he hath;

* A short quotation will confirm this:—'We praise God,' says Cartwright, 'for the present reformation of the church, so far as it is agreeable to his word. We are glad the word of God is preached, and the sacraments are administered; but we desire that which is wanting may be added, that which is superfluous may be cut off, and that all may be done according to the institutions of the apostles. The things which we defend are such that, if every hair of our heads were a life, we ought to give up all for the defence of them! *We make no separation in the church*, but attempt to separate all those things which offend the

church, that all, being united in the unadulterated doctrines of the gospel, may be more closely joined together in all the bonds of truth.'—Pp. 15-17. It is to be kept in mind also that the Brownists found in Cartwright a stern and even angry opponent. He himself confounded 'Separation' with 'Schism.'

† Taylor, as before.

‡ Cf. Price, i. page 235, seq., for a judicious refutation of Cartwright's extreme opinions.

§ Whitgift's Works, iii. page 3.

|| *Ibid.*, page 13. ¶ *Ibid.*, page 7.

and in that persuasion they follow him no otherwise than himself doth Calvin, Beza, and others, with the like persuasion that they in this cause had the truth. We being as fully persuaded, hence it resteth that some kind of trial be used to find out which part is in error.*

A book and pamphlet warfare was not the only result of the publication of the 'Admonition' and its successors. As Wilcox and Field had been instantly put in prison—and such a prison!—so Cartwright was also to be arrested. Accordingly, on 11th June 1573, a royal proclamation was issued for suppressing the 'Admonition' and the 'Defence,' and on 11th December 1573, Bishop Sandys,—a good and holy man, like good and holy Grindal, led astray by his sovereign,—issued a warrant for his apprehension. Of course the plea was for 'matters ecclesiastical'; but the *gravamen* of accusation and opposition alike was a shrewd, instinctive discovery by Elizabeth herself, that there was treason to old beliefs and prerogatives in that direct appeal, 'not to herself,' but '*to the Parliament*,' as the fountain of all authority, and as independent on the sovereign for the time being,—a noble treason, vindicated and established only at awful cost, but which has secured to us that well-defined and smoothly-working constitution of our limited monarchy, so splendidly illustrated by our present beloved and revered sovereign Victoria I., whom the good Lord long spare and 'keep.'

The warrant was unexecuted, Cartwright having been 'sheltered' by potent friends in London until he left the kingdom for Heidelberg, later the like 'city of refuge' for the coming king's hapless daughter. From thence he passed to Antwerp, where we find him so early as 1571-2, and afterwards at Middleburgh, in both places officiating as 'minister' to the English 'merchants.'† In the interval, which interval covers various comings and goings, and the period of the Controversy, 1571-1577 onwards, he and Mr Snape paid a visit to, and resided in, Jersey and Guernsey, whither they had been summoned to aid the French Refugee Protestants in these islands to organise their churches. The 'High Commission' could not, it seems, reach them here. Having accomplished this pious enterprise, Cartwright returned once more to Antwerp. There he remained several years. But at length his health gave way, and his physicians recommended him to revisit his native land. Very touching is it to read, even at this distant date, the yearnings of the illustrious exile for home. He addressed letters to the Lords of the Council, the Earl of Leicester, and Lord Burleigh, for permission to return. These two noblemen mentioned him with honour in Parliament. They also interceded with the queen; but she was inexorable. Nevertheless he ventured to return once more. He was not forty-eight hours back until Bishop Aylmer, himself at one time an extreme and vulgar assailant of the hierarchy, issued a warrant for his apprehension. Fortunately for Cartwright, unfortunately for himself, the bishop had dared to use the queen's name, as well as her (secret) authority, which roused Elizabeth, who was very willing to have her hatreds satisfied, if only she was not 'made to appear' in the accomplishment, very willing to strike, if the mace or crozier, not the sceptre, were the weapon. The result was that by the weighty and resolute intercessions of Lord Burghley, the great Puritan was released. Immediately the Earl of Leicester appointed him to the 'mastership' of his newly-founded hospital for a certain number of aged pensioners. Here, under the shelter of those walls, now old and grey, which have been so vividly and picturesquely, and with fitting quaintness, described by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his 'Our Old Home,' he cast anchor for his remaining years.‡ He was not left undisturbed; for almost at once Freake, Bishop of Wor-

* Works, i. page 142.

† Dr Steven, page 283.

‡ Read the whole delightful chapter 'About Warwick,'

Vol. i. pp. 101-142. For account of the Master's residence, p. 129, *sq.*

ester, summoned him into the Consistory Court, and suspended him from preaching; and he had over and over to appear before the High Commission and Star Chamber, but he was in England, and had always a ring of friends to stand around him, each one a name of renown still. Of this period the luminous and admirable Church historian of the Puritans says: ‘The remainder of Cartwright’s life is interwoven with the ecclesiastical history of the times. It presents us with the records of a man of high attainments, fervent zeal, and unwearied resolution, devoting himself to suffering and disgrace, in the long endeavour to achieve, as he believed, a second and a better reformation. Such examples deserve to be recorded for the reverence of future ages; and happily the time has appeared when we no longer hesitate to acknowledge exalted worth, though in alliance with principles and opinions we condemn; and such respect at least is due to the memory of Cartwright.’*

That there were ‘suffering and disgrace’ is all too plain from the interminable citations and harassments and imprisonments. But Thomas Cartwright stood true to himself, stoutly and magnanimously resisting and refusing the detestable oath, *ex officio*—a device enough to brand with opprobrium not only its century but the country. No lover of England can read the insolence and brow-beating of his mitred accusers in the Star Chamber without uttermost indignation. We do not, however, re-open the despicable ‘evil-entreating’ of this illustrious and venerable man. We stand with bared head before him. Everywhere, with mingled dignity and sauity, we find him prepared to ‘give a reason’ for his ‘faith’ and ‘hope,’ and at the same time meekly ready to acknowledge mistake and tartness of manner, and to yield everything that impinged not upon conscience. His bearing throughout is comparable to that of Paul at Cesarea, or that of Luther at Worms. †

During 1590 and 1591, he was ‘in prison in the fleet,’ but numerous applications were made on his behalf, including a letter from James of Scotland, who had, in 1583, offered him a professorship in the University of St Andrews, ‡ and at length he was released, *not*, as has been asserted, by Whitgift, but by the influence of Lord Burghley, to whom he sent a touching letter of thanks, dated Hackney, 22st May 1592. Thereupon he was tacitly restored to the liberty of preaching, which he exercised not only in his Hospital, but in the two churches of Warwick, and in many other places. It is related that after this, on coming to Cambridge, he was prevailed on to give a sermon on a week-day at Great St Mary’s, ‘where there was a great confluence of all sorts to hear him: grave men ran like boys in the streets to get places in the church. After sermon, he dined at Master Chaderton’s, and many went to the house to see, and hear him speak.’§

In 1595, Lord Zouch, being appointed to the government of Guernsey, invited Cartwright to accompany him to that island, and there he seems to have remained, at least till 1598. There he enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Sir Thomas Leighton, who succeeded to the governorship, and became acquainted with William Bradshaw, a famous divine, who was tutor to Sir Thomas Leighton’s children. Whilst in Guernsey, he corresponded with

* Marsden, p. 81.

† I refer to Brook’s Lives of the Puritans under Cartwright, Vol. ii. pp. 150–154, for the ‘articles’ and ‘charges’ with which Cartwright was troubled. Cf. also Fuller in his Church History, v. 154. See Brook’s Life of Cartwright also, p. 346, seq.; also Soames’s manly defence here of Cartwright, pp. 402–404.

‡ Cartwright in his ‘Epistola Dedicatoria’—prefixed to his Exposition of Ecclesiastes (4to, 1604)—tells James, refers to and makes grateful acknowledgment of the invitation to St Andrews, explaining that he should have

accepted it with alacrity but for his engagements at Antwerp. His words are noticeable: ‘Pernicissime et alacerrime advolassem nisi pastoritio vinculo quo Anglantuerpiae Ecclesiae tam alstrictus eram, propeditus fuisset,’ p. 3. The clumsy ‘Anglantuerpiae,’ shews his anxiety to connect his congregation with the mother Church of England—answer in itself to his alleged renunciation of his English consecration of which so much has been made, ignorantly and malignantly.

§ Coop. r, p. 361, quoting Clarke, p. 22.

Sir Francis Hastings, James Montague, master of Sidney College, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, and Laurence Chaderton, the first master of Emmanuel College.*

He mellowed very tenderly. An impartial examination of the facts will satisfy every one who cares to be satisfied, that his earlier opinions and principles and conscientious scruples remained UNCHANGED—that these were too much part of the man to be changed; while Benjamin Brook has unanswerably disposed of the statement of Whitgift's panegyrist, Sir George Paule, as to penitent confession of 'schism' and the like.† But Archbishop Whitgift and he met, and the two old men, drawing nearer to one another, met forgivingly, and 'in charity.' Their old controversies were as a level grave; and as Jacob and Esau met at the burial of Isaac, they met and clasped hands. The great Puritan spoke soft words of gratitude: the Prelate tender words of high appreciation—the latter not to be lost, spite of Lord Macaulay's burning words of reprobation, in the shadow of prior and subsequent wrongs.

Perhaps the most remarkable tribute to the position and weight of Cartwright is that which was paid him in this 'later time.' In the year 1582, the Papists, annoyed by the influence of the Bible in the English tongue, and finding it impossible longer to withhold it from the 'common people,' published an English version of the New Testament. But this was not a translation from the original Greek,—which they pretended, as still they do, had been corrupted,—but a translation of the Latin translation called the Vulgate, infinitely corrupt and defective. The object of issuing this English version—called the Rheinish translation, because proceeding from the English Seminary at Rheims—was to neutralize, and if possible to bring into disrepute, the Protestant English version, as well as by its marginal annotations to insinuate the errors of the Church of Rome.‡

It was felt that in turn this book must be answered, and its abundant errors and sophisms exposed. Queen Elizabeth applied to Beza, then resident in Geneva, to undertake the task. But he declined it, replying that one of her own subjects was far better qualified for the task than himself, viz., Thomas Cartwright, of whom years before he had written that the sun shone not upon a more learned man.§ Sir Francis Walsingham then applied to Cartwright, sending him from his own purse one hundred pounds, for the purchase of books, and for other expenses. This was in 1583, and it was understood to be with the knowledge and approval of the Queen. At the same time, he was similarly solicited by the foremost men of the University of Cambridge, as is still to be verified by the Latin 'Letter' addressed to him, which the publisher prefixed to the noble folio when it appeared posthumously.|| The task was undertaken, and with indomitable perseverance, and still contending with painful

* *Ibid.* Among the Lansdowne MSS. are preserved various letters and papers of Cartwright and his contemporaries. One of his letters to Sir Michael Hicks, his friend and patron, who had desired instructions on the duty of prayer, and that he would provide him with a certain form for his use, has been the subject of much churchly caricature and vituperation, especially by Churton in his Life of Nowell. The following familiar words have been specially animadverted upon: 'Prayer being, as it were, a bunch of keys, whereby to go to all the treasures and storehouses of the Lord, his butteries, his pantries, his cellars, his wardrobe, and whatever is needful either for this life or for the life to come, it is Christian wisdom in you to inquire after the skill and knowledge of it (See Brook, pp. 452, 453.) The ridicule directed against this kind of phraseology, falls innocuous when it is selected

to expose the Puritans as contrasted with the Conformists and Ritualists. Only the densest ignorance of contemporary literature would so distinguish. It was a quaintness of the period on both sides, as might be illustrated by a hundred examples.

† Cf. Brook's Life of Cartwright, pp. 442–451. Perry is misled here, page 112.

‡ Cf. here Hopkins, Vol. iii. pp. 348, seq.: the whole excellent.

§ Zurich 'Letters,' page 479, note 3. Marsden, p. 168.

|| See the 'Copie of a Letter written by sundry learned men unto Mr Cartwright, to provoke and encourage him to the answering of the Rheinish,' adjoined in Latin and in English to 'The Publisher's Preface.'

It may be noted that among the signatures were those of William Whitaker, William Fulke, John Field, Richard

disease, prosecuted. But in 1586, he received 'commandment from the Archbischop to deal no farther in it.' His Grace had obtained a copy of the 'Preface,' in which he suspected an attempt now and then 'to magnify the New Discipline.' Cartwright desisted. But some years afterwards, 'upon the special solicitations and encouragements of honourable personages,' he resumed the work. 'But yet receiving new discouragements from his great adversaries,' and hindered by his ministerial duties and personal sufferings, he proceeded only to the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation. He ceased from his task, however, only when interrupted by death. For years the gigantic undertaking lay in manuscript utterly neglected; but at last was printed in a splendid folio in 1618, remaining an indestructible monument of rare and varied learning, profound thinking, admirable refutation of error, robust and sound sense, and fearless honesty. It stands alone. Fulke's earlier 'Examination' is a plaything beside it. As Thomas Fuller long ago observed, the Church of Rome has never ventured to meddle with it. What are our Protestant Societies about, that they allow such a mine of learning and argument to lie unproduced? This extraordinary work is all the more extraordinary that its author was so crippled with the most terrible of diseases that he had to write and read upon his knees.

He had married in 1577-78 a sister of the patriotic and harshly-used John Stubbe, and had a family of daughters, and at least one son.

On 25th December 1603, he preached at Warwick from Ecclesiastes xii. 7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' Two days afterwards—on Tuesday 27th—he died, after hours of well nigh ecstatic prayer and preparation for heaven. The noble and the good 'wept' over him; 'and devout men carried' him 'to his burial,' under the shadow of the tall slender tower of St Mary's Church, grey, but ivied, among the clustering roofs. There he 'sleeps well,' in need of no flatteries in his epitaph to tell that a good man and a holy has long gone to dust beneath the mossed stone. He lies—the taunt of Dugdale turned into a watchword, like the name Puritan itself—'The standard-bearer of Puritanism.'† 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, says the Spirit, they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.'

It only remains that we refer the reader to the *Athenæ Cantabrigienses* for a full enumeration of the many writings of Cartwright.

With respect to the 'Commentary on Colossians' now reprinted, it consists of 'Notes' by evidently not the most erudite 'hearer,' and seems never to have been seen, or read, or in any way authorised, by the preacher. His executors and editors, Dod and Hildersam, probably disavowed it as imperfect. But while large allowance must and will be made for these facts, after every abatement there will be found in the 'Commentary' its own best evidence of being genuine, not a little weighty and keen-sighted exposition, expressed with

Gardiner. It is important to keep in mind that Whitaker was one of the applicants, inasmuch as Cartwright's opponents have cited an impudent forgery, bearing the name of Whitaker, deprecatory of his 'Defence' of the 'Admonition,' and of his part in the controversy. It is clumsily done, and obviously, as the following approval of Cartwright's 'Defence' and of his conduct of the controversy, which Whitaker signed, and probably himself composed, will evidence:—'With you, therefore,' runs the Letter, 'are we earnest, most reverend Cartwright, that you would set yourself against the unhallowed endeavours of mischievous men, either by refuting the whole book, or at

least some part thereof. It is not for every man workmanlike to frame God's Tabernacle, but for Bazaleel and Aholiab: neither is every one to be rashly thrust forth into the Lord's battles, but such captains are to be chosen from amongst David's Worthies, of which, as we acknowledge you to be, *by the former battles undergone for the walls of our city, the Church*, we doubt not, if you will enter into his war. . . . will be all.' &c., &c. After references are equally explicit. Cf. also Brook, pp. 207-209, 399. Even Marsden blunders over the alleged letter of Whitaker, and inferior men follow in his wake.

* Warwickshire, Vol. i. page 443.

less point than his Latin, but well put and suggestive, and above all, much spiritual relish imparted to the ‘grace and truth’ of this most attractive of Paul’s Epistles. It is probable that only a very small edition was printed, and consequently it has long been very difficult to be procured, and has fetched an extravagant price.

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

KINROSS.

A DILUCIDATION, OR EXPOSITION,

OF THE

EPISTLE OF ST PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS,

DELIVERED IN SUNDRY SERMONS.

SERMON I.

Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother.—COL. I. 1.

IT will make much for the understanding of the place in hand, and of this epistle, to know the occasion of the apostle's writing; for thereby we shall more easily come to the understanding of the things delivered by the apostle.

The occasion is drawn from the text itself; for whosoever will know the drift of the Scripture, must take it from the place of Scripture itself, being sometimes set in the beginning, as in the book of the Proverbs; sometimes in the latter end, as in the general epistle of Peter; sometimes in the midst, as 1 Tim., in one verse the drift is delivered; sometimes of the whole body of the Scripture, that is handled, whether psalm, prophecy, epistle, &c.

The point in hand is set forth in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. In the 8th verse, the occasion, which was this, that whereas the Colossians had received the gospel well, and soundly preached unto them, first, they suffered themselves to go aside, and to follow vain conceits, or reasons drawn from philosophy; in the sixth and seventh, the second cause is shewed, which is, that they snifled themselves to be led away to follow the ceremonies of the law; which before had been the ordinances of God, but being ceased are become the traditions of men, as the apostle calleth them.

For the better understanding of this epistle, we are to know the conveyance of the matter of it. And, as in all Paul's epistles, he useth to set down, first, the principal grounds of religion; secondly, the exhortations. And as he useth in other, so doth he

in this epistle. It therefore containeth two parts: first, the delivery of the body, and of the substantial points in religion of our Saviour.

The second part (beginning at the 3d chapter), is a declaration of the godly conversation, wherein all true professors of the gospel, which profess Christ, must live.

The first and second chapters are of doctrine, the other of manners. In the first, is delivered the truth, and sincere and plain doctrine (in brief) of the gospel set forth. In the second, are rooted up and thrown down all those wretched opinions, which were by the false apostles sown in the hearts of the Colossians.

That which he speaketh of manners, beginneth at the third chapter, where, first, the apostle exhorteth generally to all good, holy, and righteous works. Secondly, from the general he falleth to the particular declaration of those duties, he would have them practise; as of masters to servants, parents to children, and children to parents, of husbands to wives, and wives to husbands, &c.; and then returneth again to general exhortations; and this is, as it were, the general conveyance of the matter of the epistle.

In this text, to the 14th verse, he doth labour to draw the Colossians to the knowledge of his love to them; which he doth, first by his preface, which is usual in all his epistles, in his salutations, wherein he wisheth good things unto them from God. The second thing, to persuade them of his love, is a testification that he did pray for them in both kinds; both by praising

and thanking God for things they had received, and by petition, where he prayed to God, and desired the increase of the graces of God in them. And hereby he insinuateth himself, and stampeth, as it were, in their minds his love and affection to them, to the end his doctrine might be the better received by them.

As if he should say :

I Paul, understanding that there are some that go about to spoil you, and to make a prey of you, partly by show of wisdom and philosophy, and partly by the beggarly elements or ceremonies of the Jews, thought it needful to write unto you, that according as you have received Jesus Christ at the first, even so that you would both abide and proceed further in him, that you may be rooted and further built in the faith.

And that I write unto you, know that I do it with warrant, for I am an apostle of Jesus Christ, not tied to one particular congregation, or to one province, yea, or to one kingdom ; but am an ambassador, and have commission unto all the world. Neither do I come to this charge of mine own will, or of the will of any other man, but by the will of God, and the same his revealed will. And albeit my authority herein be sufficient to convince all men of the truth I write of, yet, for further and stronger persuasion thereof, I have joined Timothy, my beloved brother, to bear record with me, that in the mouth of two witnesses, the truth may be more surely established, ver. 1.

And considering that the blessing of all labours dependeth upon the Lord, our beginning is with hearty prayer unto God, for the grace and favour of God to be freely given, together with all the blessings, both of this life and of the life to come, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, to you Colossians ; yet not all that dwell in that city, but unto those alone, which by faith are saints, and brethren, not in the flesh, but in Jesus Christ, ver. 2.

And that you may have further testimony of our love towards you, know that we do continually both pray and give thanks for you unto God, whom, to separate from all false gods, I do call the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; ver. 3.

For the report of your profession of godliness in Christ Jesus, and of your love towards all saints is come unto us ; ver. 4.

Which both profession and love we know to be sincere, in that they are upholden in you through the hope and expectation of a treasure laid up, not upon earth, but in heaven ; which hope you have conceived, not of your own phantasy, nor of the word of any man, but by the word of truth, that is to say, the gospel, ver. 5.

And if you ask which is that truth or gospel, verily no other than that which is preached among you now, which is not amongst you alone, but is preached in all the world ; a certain note of the truth thereof, there having been never, nor never shall be, any doctrine, which hath leavened so great a lump of dough

as is the world, but only the doctrine of the gospel. And for further assurance that it is the only truth of God, I offer this to your consideration, that as in other places of the world, so amongst you it hath brought forth fruit even sithence the first time you have truly and sincerely acknowledged this grace of God, ver. 6.

Where if you will say, we know not what doctrine is preached in all the world, nor what fruit it hath brought forth, although it be no other thing than the common and constant report that many may bring unto you ; yet to come nearer you, and rid you of all doubt which is the true gospel of Christ, it is even the very same that you have learned of Epaphras, whom if you love me, you must love him, as being my beloved follow-servant in Christ ; yea, if you love yourselves, you must respect him, as being a faithful minister of Christ for you, ver. 7.

Who made manifest unto us your true love, not only natural, but that especially which is spiritual, whereof the Spirit is the author, ver. 8.

And as we give thanks for your good ; so, and even for the same cause you have well begun, both because you should not go back again, and for that you have not yet attained to perfection, even from the first day we heard of you we never give over praying for you, making this suit, that ye may be filled with the acknowledgment of his will, and all wisdom and understanding, whereof the Holy Spirit is the author, ver. 9.

Not that you should content yourselves with a bare knowledge and contemplation of heavenly things, but that ye may walk worthy of those, whom the Lord hath called to such honour, to a full and whole pleasing of him, both by bringing forth fruit in every good work, and by being increased in the knowledge of God, ver. 10.

Wherein because there are many difficulties and hindrances laid in your way, our suit also is, that you may be strengthened with all manner of strength, according to that glorious power, which, being in God, he is able to furnish you of ; that even with joy you may be able to bear all troubles, how grievous and how continual soever they be, ver. 11.

The sum is, a declaration that the apostle maketh of the singular affection and love that he hath to the Colossians, which is first considered in the salutation, as it were the indorsement of the letter.

Secondly, in the profession which he maketh of his and Timotheus's thanksgiving and prayer for them to the Lord.

From the ninth verse until the twelfth is contained, the cause of the prayer for the Colossians ; the prayer itself, wherein is contained a request for perfect knowledge and obedience.

First, the apostle sets forth himself by his name Paul. He had two names given him : one at his circumcision, viz. Saul ; his father being a Gentile,* he

* This is unquestionably a mistake. He was a " Hebrew of the Hebrews," and had the privilege of a Roman citizen as a native of a free city.—ED.

had another name, viz. Paul, in regard that they would keep a note of his privilege in Rome.

The reason why he would rather keep the profane than the old name Saul, taken from God's people, signifying *one begged of God*, is this, that because that holy name was not so pleasant to the Gentiles, of whom especially he was minister, he is content to take the worse name, which he took not so much pleasure in.

Whereby we learn that in matter of name we do not always please ourselves so much as others, viz., the church, it being a matter of indifferency. Hence,

Doct. 1. Heathenish names may be used of Christians, so there be no hindrance of the church's edification.

Secondly, for the apostle's calling. If one had asked him, What calling have you to deal with us? he answers, that he was an apostle, which had a general charge over the whole world. Indeed, there is great difference between the ministers now, which may not rove about, but have their charge and place limited them, as if they had but one plough-land to till; whereas the apostles' ministry was general: they had the field of the whole world to till by their message, and by their miracles, for the publication and confirmation of the word. As in time of wars it is necessary that there should be a general and lord marshal, but when that wars are ceased and there is peace, there needeth only to be a garrison and captain made for them; so whenas the great conquest of the gospel was to be made over the world, it was necessary there should be apostles as generals, afterward it was sufficient to have the pastors, doctors, and elders, as a garrison in the church of God, to keep and govern it. Therefore we see, after James was killed, none was elected into his room, as at the first instead of Judas. So likewise we see, in the building of the house, the chief master-builder is only for the platform, the other builders afterward are sufficient. Indeed, the fruit of the apostles' ministry remaineth still unto the church.

Doct. 2. If we will do any good in the church or commonwealth, we must not so much as attempt it without lawful calling, and warrant thereunto, no, not so much as in an household.

It followeth how the apostle proves himself to be a

true apostle, and not a false, as there were many then which, under the name of apostles, did sow the tares of error and sedition.

By the will of God, viz., not by the secret will, by the which are wicked and unlawful apostles, magistrates, and ministers; but he was by the revealed will of God, it being manifested unto him in the way, as he was going to Damascus, Acts ix., and also revealed to the disciples afterward.

Doct. 3. Learning, piety, and a lawful ordination make a complete minister, one pleasing unto God, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3.

Here, then, we are to examine whether we be the ministers of God indeed, and that we are to do by the revealed will of God, wherein the Lord doth note forth who are those that are called to the ministry by him, viz. such as are endued with fit gifts, and enter as he requireth. Saint Paul to Timothy describes a minister, first, by his learning, 'able to teach,' and confute; secondly, by his good manners, as a necessary thing in all Christians, yet more especially in a minister; and therefore he maketh mention of those special things which are necessary for all Christians, so principally are required in the ministers, which are to be lights, Mat. v. 14, and good examples to their flocks, Tit. ii. 7.

In that the apostle joineth Timothy with him, we observe, first, his humility, that would join his scholar with himself in the honour, which had no part of the labour which he had taken in admonishing and instructing the Colossians. This he doth to the end the truth might be further credited.

Doct. 4. He teacheth that though others be far underneath us, as Timothy was to Paul; yet for the furtherance of the truth, we are not to think much to join them as equal with us.

Secondly, We observe his wisdom herein, that howsoever his testimony had been sufficient against all the world, yet because two witnesses were of more force and assurance, he taketh unto him Timothy. And therefore it was that Christ sent the disciples two by two, one to speak and another to bear record, Luke x. 2. So when Paul and Barnabas went together, Paul spake, and therefore they called him *Mereny*, Acts xiv. 12.

SERMON II.

To them which are at Colosse, saints and faithful brethren in Christ: Grace be with you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love towards all saints: for the hope sake which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye have heard before by the word of truth, which is the gospel.—COL. I. 2-6.

BEFORE the apostle cometh to the substance and point of the epistle, he doth wisely (according to his manner) draw attention to that he speaketh of.

And therefore there is, as it were, a preface of the epistle unto the 14th verse. For as in a house, which is stately built, there is a porch to enter in by, so the

apostle, in this stately building of his, hath, first, a preface set before to draw attention, which he doth first from the authority of the epistle, which we have heard drawn from his own person. Secondly, in the person of Timothy.

Next, from the testification of the love he did bear unto them, from this verse to the end of the preface, which he laboureth in, as a minister ought, to testify his affection towards them, whereby the word might be more lovingly received and accepted, willingly and carefully practised.

Doct. 1. It should be a duty of all ministers, that the people may be persuaded of the minister's love towards them, and then they will be more easily persuaded by the doctrine he teacheth; and in this the apostle laboureth in all his epistles. And by how much the more he is to deal sharply with them, by so much the more he laboureth in this point, to let them know that it is done in love; that the people may think they must be very [un]reasonable persons, if when they know whatsoever the minister speaketh, yea, even that the sharp reproofs of their minister are done in love for their good, yet they do not accept it. And therefore in the Proverbs it is said, Prov. xxvii., that 'the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy.' And he were barbarous, or rather a madman, that from some grievous disease, being pricked by the skilful chirurgeon, if he will flee upon him and be revenged of him; so when the ministers lance the sores of their souls, in the ministry of the word, what a barbarous rudeness is it to fall out with the minister for it, &c.

His love he testifieth, 1, by a loving salutation, and then by testifying that he daily prayed for them, both thanking God, and desiring all good things for them, and he progetteth his prayer in a form of thanksgiving and petition for them which he setteth down.

Of the persons saluting we have heard; the parties saluted are the Colossians, described by two titles: first title, saints; secondly, faithful brethren.

For the first, they are called *saints* for two causes: one without themselves, in Christ; the other wrought within them by the Spirit of Christ, by the Spirit of sanctification.

Doct. 2. All that have the fear of God are *saints*, because they have the righteousness of Christ, which is in heaven, without them; his sufferings are accounted theirs, his fulfilling of the law is theirs, which is a greater righteousness than the angels have, being the righteousness of God, as the apostle saith. Again, they are righteous, in that being justified they are also sanctified, and have a beginning, and a care, and endeavour to walk holily, uprightly, and sincerely, for in some measure there is knowledge; especially, in some measure there is in them a sanctified understanding, memory, will, and affection, and an endeavour to do the will of God, Rom. vi. 7, 8.

Use 1. This serveth to confute the man of Rome's

blasphemy, which will have none to be saints but those that he canoniseth.

Use 2. Again, this serveth to reprove us, which are so far from this, that we will not abide to make profession of holiness. For if it be told many of their wretchedness, they will say they are no saints, and so they may say indeed, their lives testify it. He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of Christ's, Rom. vi.

Use 3. Thirdly, This ought to serve as a bridle to withdraw us from sin and unholiness, that when any filthiness cometh into our hearts, to wrong our profession, &c., we should examine ourselves, doth this become me, which profess holiness?

Example we have in Nehemiah, that having authority from the king to build the temple, when a false prophet named Shemaiah, Nehem. vi. 10, whom he took to have been a true prophet, had bid him hide himself in the house of God, because that night he should be laid in wait for and slain; he, considering that he was the prince of the people, saith, Shall I do thus? Is it not a shame for me? &c. Where the consideration of his authority did withdraw him from this shameful and cowardly thing. And ought not much more the consideration of our high estate in Christ, that are Christians, withdraw us from sin? Ought not we much more to be ashamed of it, which is so shameful and abominable a thing? Are not we kings (as it is said, Rev. i. 6) and priests in Christ, and shall not we hereby be withdrawn from sin, than which nothing is more base? If a nobleman's son give himself to base things unfit for his estate, we will rebuke him for it, as from a thing unfit him, and will say to him, Doth this become a gentleman? &c. And seeing we can rebuke him, why can we not much more rebuke ourselves of our sins, which are far more detestable and unseemly for the children of God?

Title 2. *Faithful*, i.e. religious, which have received the truth of God, and submit their souls unto it; and this the apostle exhorteth Timothy unto, 1 Tim. vi. 11. So that in that he saith some had made shipwreck of faith, 1 Tim. i. 19, it is not meant of justifying faith, but of religion in a good conscience; for religion cannot abide to lie in a filthy conscience.

Doct. 3. These two go together; for whosoever is a saint is truly religious, working holiness in the sight of God, for none can be holy before God, unless he be truly religious before God; for a man cannot bring forth good fruit, before he be a good tree, and he cannot, unless he be a new creature, bring forth the effects of a new creature. Now to be as a good tree is to be truly religious, for those gorgeous works, as building colleges, &c., if they be not of religion, they are evil. So contrary, if a man be truly religious, he will bring forth good works. True religion hath the true fruits of it, James, i. 26, 27, and iii. 17, to keep himself from the lusts of the world, and to visit the sick, the fatherless, and widows. So that if he be a

saint, he is holy; if holy, he is religious; if he love not holiness, he is not religious, make what profession he can, though it be never so good. From the titles we come to the benefits desired.

He wisheth, 1, grace; 2, peace.

1. Grace. The fountain of all goodness is God, and the graces of his children are as springs and fruits, that proceed from the mere grace, love, and favour of God; which favour and grace of God the apostle wisheth to them.

Doct. 1. So that here we learn that all good things whatsoever come from God's grace and mercy alone. For if by works, then not by grace, for then grace were not grace, Rom. v.

2. Secondly, He wisheth peace, viz., all things necessary for this life, prosperity, health, &c., as is the manner of the Hebrews in wishing peace, to understand all outward prosperity.

Doct. 2. He that hath all things hath nothing, unless he have God's favour.

He setteth grace before peace, to teach us first to seek for the favour of God, and then to look for the fruits of the favour of God. But we usually do clean contrary; for we seek first the fruits of God's grace, for peace, wealth, prosperity, &c., and not care for the grace and love of God. But our looking for those things, without having the love of God, is nothing but hatred of God; our gold no gold, our peace no peace, our love of parents and of men, hatred of God. And better were it that we had none of all these, than to have them without the love of God in Christ. The prophet, wheras two kings came against Ahaz, telling him he should be defended from those kings, Isa. vii. 2 (howsoever Ahaz was a wicked king, and would not believe it, 2 Kings xvi. 2, 3), yet he tells him a sign and token of it, that 'a virgin should conceive and bear a Son,' &c., Isa. vii. 14, noting thereby that all benefits whatsoever are from God in Christ alone. And therefore if we seek for anything out of Christ, we seek amiss; and if we desire anything before the love of God, we do as harlots, which love the gifts better than the persons that give them. In that he saith, 'Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,' he there shutteth not out the Holy Ghost, as though it came not as well from him, as from the Father and from the Son; for in the word grace, the Holy Ghost is included, seeing that grace is the gift of the Holy Ghost alone.

We praise God, viz., he and Timothy.

Doct. 3. Here consider that they give thanks to God alone, because all grace and mercy, both of eternal life and the comforts of this life, come from him, and therefore our petitions are to be made to him for them, and praise to be rendered unto him for enjoying them.

Quest. How can this be? did he not preach, eat, and drink, and apply his occupation?

Ans. Here the apostle meaneth, that he kept a constant course of prayer for them. And to the Thessalonians he saith, 1 Thes. v. 16, 'Pray without ceasing,' whereas a man is bound to do his business in his calling also, but the meaning is to keep a constant course daily of this duty. Therefore the sacrifice in the law, which was done morning and evening, is called a continual sacrifice, because of the continual course of it; so here he meaneth that daily, so often as they pray, they make mention of them in their prayers.

Doct. The duty of all Christians to keep daily a continual course privately in prayer. More particularly the minister is to pray for his people, not only in the church, but privately at home, as the apostle here did. And therefore we must not think ourselves discharged of private prayer for public. Which sheweth it is a duty of all Christians, as to pray in the church, so also to pray privately in their families, and also by themselves, and therefore to set a time apart for that purpose. Reasons of it are great; first, there is no man or woman, of what state soever, but they have particular sins, which every one hath not. For when they pray in the house, they desire pardon of sins, which are common to the house; but I may have committed a sin the which they have not, and I may have received particular blessings, which others have not, and I have need of some particular blessing in my place, that others have not need of; and therefore it is necessary that we should make a choice of some particular time, wherein by ourselves we may have recourse to God.

We give thanks. Whensoever he prayed he gave thanks, and for that he prayed he gave thanks for. Howsoever there were great faults in the church, yet he is thankful for some good thing left them. But such is the corruption of our days, that howsoever we are most especially bound to this duty of thanksgiving, as being the duty of the angels, and that which after this life we shall only perform in heaven, yet though, both privately and publicly, we will peradventure pray and ask still of God, we are negligent in rendering thanks.

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereby God is discerned from all other gods. In the law he was discerned by 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' but this is a more excellent difference which here the apostle gives, that our God is 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' not the God of the Turks, and infidels, &c.

Then is set forth the cause of his thanks, viz., for their love and faith. *Quest.* Why doth the apostle give thanks and prayeth for them, which were called already? Why doth he not rather pray for heathen and wicked men that lie grovelling in their sins? *Ans.* We are bound indeed to pray for all, 1 Tim. ii. 1; but we are more specially bound to love and pray for those that are called already, Gal. vi. 10; for as God

shews more tokens of his love to a man, so must I shew more and more tokens of it. For howsoever God's love cannot increase, yet the tokens of it increase; but ours must increase, as we see the tokens of God's love to increase towards any.

The degrees, then, of our love and of our prayers

towards others are, that we are bound to pray 'for all, but especially for those that are of the household of faith,' and amongst them for Joseph, viz., for those that are afflicted; and amongst them that are in affliction, we are especially to pray for those that suffer for the gospel's sake.

SERMON III.

Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love towards all saints.—COL. I. 4.

WE have heard the last day of the prayer and of the thanksgiving given by the apostle unto God for the Colossians. Now followeth to speak of the causes of the thanksgiving,—the matter was for their faith towards Christ, and love towards all saints: these are the causes of the thanksgiving and prayers the apostle made daily and ordinarily for the saints at Colosse.

Doct. These things we are to pray and give God thanks for, especially in others.

Quest. How cometh it to pass that, there being divers gifts bestowed on the Colossians, yet the apostle praiseth God and prayeth to him for these only? Seeling there is nothing but which is received from God, he is to be praised and prayed unto for them all, especially seeing he before wished them peace, viz., all temporal benefits, and having prayed to God for these, why did he not thank God for them, as health, peace, &c.?

Ans. The reason that the apostle made choice of faith and love, not of other (though he was not unmindful of them), is to teach us what gifts we are especially to pray for, and desire of God, and to give thanks for, being received. Where he meeteth with the corruption of men, that will pray and desire worldly things, and will labour mightily in the comforts of this present life, and never make mention of these, which are principal, wheras the other are but sweepings, and those things which are to be cast to dogs, in comparison, and as dung and dross, nay, less than nothing in comparison of Christ, and the things belonging to him, which are of most singular price. As if a man should be careful for the hangings of a house, and have no care for a house to put them in, or to lie in; and for the bosses of the bridle, and not the bridle; for the traps of the horse, and have never a horse to ride upon. And therefore the apostle sets down these two, notwithstanding he gave God thanks for every blessing they had received.

Particularly he first bindeth and limiteth faith to the object, which is Christ, by whom by our faith we lay hold on God and his promises; therefore Christ saith, John xiv. 1, 'Believe in God, but believe in me also;' as if he should say, Ye cannot believe in God unless ye believe in me first, for none can see the Father but by the Son. And as the apostle saith,

'God dwelleth in light, that none can come unto,' 1 Tim. vi. 16, but by Christ, without whom we are unto God as stubble to the fire.

And as a man cannot look on the sun without hurt of his eyes, unless there be a cloud between, so God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is as a sun, that, unless the cloud of Christ, the mediator, come between us, we cannot behold the sunshine of God's glory. And without the screen of Christ's mediation we cannot come near to God, which is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. Now, by Christ we come near to God boldly and lay hold on him.

Doct. Further, here he sets forth that we are not to believe in any but Christ, not in any angel or saint, as the Virgin Mary, as the Church of Rome and the papists wretchedly expound the articles of our faith. For faith only layeth hold on God, and cannot be communicated to any. Indeed, love spreadeth itself to men, but faith is only in God's promises. For as it is said, Deut. vi. 5, x. 20, Mat. iv. 10, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,' and sith faith is the chiefest worship and service of all, and the instrument of all true worship, it ought only to lay hold on God in Christ.

? Love to the saints. Here we see to whom love properly belongs, namely, to the saints who are (as we have heard) justified by Christ and have his righteousness imputed unto them, and have the beginning of holiness in them, which is the true fear of God.

The apostle doth not here shut out all men, even those that are aliens from the house of God, for the Jews, Turks, &c., are our neighbours, and of our flesh, as the apostle saith, and therefore to be prayed for. Here we are to examine ourselves whether we have true love or no, viz., if we love the saints, viz., those that are joined to us in the bond of Christianity: for our love is usually so strait-laced that it cannot go from ourselves, and if it go to our wives and those in our house, yet so poor it is that it cannot go out of our doors over our threshold; whereas we are to love others, even those that hate us, to speak well of those that speak ill of us, Mat. v.

And our love must be to all the saints, to the poor as well as to the rich, whom St James meeteth with and sayeth, If a poor man, though of the true religion, eome in, he is bid to go behind the door and to

sit at our footstool; if one rich, he is exalted, James ii. 3, 4; whereas true love doth embrace even all that do profess the truth. Hero St James discovereth the hypocrisy of men in their excuses. Why (will they say) are not we to love our neighbours? and the rich men are our neighbours. True, he is your neighbour; but if you love him, why do you not love him also that is poor, which is more near, peradventure, if he be a professor? And again, if your love be to the rich because of the commandment of God, then yo will love the poor as well as the rich. As if for the love of God ye abstain from adultery, theft, murder, &c., then ye will abstain from all other sins which are of the same nature, all the commandments being of the same nature, coming from God, who is one and the same; and, therefore, if I abstain from one sin for the love of God's sake, I will as well abstain from another for that cause. And thereforo this condemneth the common practico of men, that being blamed for some one sin, as drunkenness, &c., will say, I am no thief, no murderer, &c., and so will justify himself. But if he have no conscience of that sin, he is guilty of all other, James ii. 10. Indeed, a man by infirmity may fail, and be inclining to one sin more than to another, but if he have no strife against it nor hatred of it, it is a sure token that he is guilty of all other sins, and hath no true hatred of any. He confirmeth their faith and love by the true end, that there being a true end of them, then their faith and love are true, ver. 5. The end is, ye look for reward in heaven, without which it were impossible your faith should stand, and your love should be supported; for there are so many assaults befalling unto us in this present life, which would overthrow our faith and queuch our love, unless it were supported by the hope of everlasting life. Therefore, in the epistle to the Hebrews it is compared to an anchor, Heb. vi. 19; yet therero is a difference, for as men cast their anchor into the

sea to be fastened in the earth, so this is fastened in heaven, that no storm of temptation or trouble shall be able to break it off.

Quest. Whether is it lawful for a man, in looking to the reward, to use it as a spur to do good things, where the papists charge us wrongfully, that we hold that it is not lawful to do good works, in regard of everlasting life, nor to avoid sin, in regard of the judgment of hell?

Ans. We profess and hold, that if there be nothing else but everlasting life that we do good for, there is no faith, nor love; if only I avoid sin for the terror and fear of hell, no piety and godliness. But the principal regard of our doing good, is to glorify God; and therefore our Saviour saith, Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that seeing your good works, they may glorify God, your heavenly Father.' And we are principally also to have regard to avoid evil for the glory of God, but yet that doth not exclude the regard of our salvation. Our reward, which our hope looketh unto, is laid up, as a treasure very safe, and this is laid up in heaven with God.

Doct. And therefore teacheth us that the faith of God's children is without doubting, contrary to tho papists, who will have doubting; therefore the apostle saith, blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have given unto us an inheritance, which is reserved for us. Comparing the spiritual Canaan to the land of promise. And this is, saith he, an inheritance which cannot be polluted by wicked men, and which cannot be taken away, as that was, nor made barren, as that is now, by the sins of the Jews, which was once flowing with milk and honey, contrary to the wretched cavils of certain atheists, who, because it is now barren, will go about to falsify Moses. And, saith he, it is laid up for you in safety, and yo are kept and laid up for it, and preserved, that neither it shall be taken from you, nor you can be lost, or kept from it.

SERMON IV.

For the hope's sake which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye have heard before by the word of truth, which is the gospel.—COL. I. 5.

THE apostle, as we have heard, doth give God thanks for two things; first, faith towards God, and love towards all saints. In the first place ye have heard confirmed unto us the truth, both of their faith and their love. One mark of the truth thereof we have heard to be their hope, which did uphold them in their faith and in their love. Now it is further described to be true faith and true love, here it being set forth by another argument, namely, that they have heard it in the word of truth; so that it is true faith and love, if it come by the hearing of the word of truth, which is the gospel.

Doct. So that the word is an instrument, and is set as a cause of true faith, and true love, and true hope; for this is not as the proverb goeth amongst men, words are as wind, which indeed is true in men's words; but this word, which the apostle here speaketh of, is another thing, more effectual, viz., that whereby God giveth faith, love, and hope unto his children. According as it is in the prophet, the Lord saith, I will not always be angry, I will not always chide; for then the souls and bodies of men would be consumed; but, saith the Lord, though I have chastised them, yet I will heal them, I will comfort them, and the

medicine I will use shall be the fruit and reverence of the lips. And this shall bring peace, that is, such peace that none can take from them ; this is the word of God, and this indeed we may trust unto, and lean upon. Men may speak that which they will not or cannot perform ; but saith Solomon to the Lord, 1 Kings viii. 15, ‘That which thy mouth hath spoken, thine arm will perform.’ The arm and mouth of God are of one measure, whereas men have wide mouths to speak much, but short arms to bring to pass that they speak ; but God he is as good as his word, nay, oftentimes he is better than his word, for he oft performeth and bringeth to pass that he never promised. As to the children of Israel, he promised them only the land of Canaan, but he gave them, besides the whole land of Canaan, two other kingdoms which he never promised ; and to Zacharias, for his unbelief he was stricken dumb, he promised to give him his speech at the birth of the child, but besides he gave him also the gift of prophecy, Luke i.

The word of God hath another title here annexed, ‘the word of truth,’ for all the promises of God are in Christ *yea and amen*, as Paul saith; it is undoubtedly true, and therefore in that regard it is a word of truth. And again it is the word of truth, as it is in Ps. xii. 6, because it is tried and purged seven times ; that is very often, for as silver and gold, when it is often tried in the fire, at length will be so pure that there will be no dross found in it, even so is the word of God, and therefore we may well believe it ; because for all the often trial of it, yet still it stands sure. Metals with often trials will diminish ; God’s word is not so ; and therefore our Saviour Christ, in his prayer that he made for his apostles, John xvii., and consequently for the church of God, saith, ‘Sanctify them by the truth,’ and in the next verse, saith he, ‘Thy word is truth.’ Again, by the word of God, we are bound to believe other truths ; we are not bound unto this, to believe there was an Aristotle, and Plato, &c. Further, it is called the word of truth, because it is the touchstone of all truth, according to which all is to be tried in the church of God, and the church itself to be governed by it ; which confutes the papists, which makes the word of God to be controlled by the word of the church ; and if the church should say that the epistles of James, or of any of the apostles, were not the word, then it were no word. Which is a vile blasphemy, for what disorder were it that the word of the wife should prevail against the word of her spouse and husband, in his own house especially ?

Again, the word is called the gospel; the gospel is an accomplishment of all the promises of God in Christ at his coming, which began at Saint John Baptist ; for howsoever the prophets and David, &c., have notably and plainly spoken of Christ, yet that was not the gospel, they speaking of things to come, the gospel of that which is present. To teach us to consider what thankfulness we are bound to render to

God, for that mercy and light that he hath vouchsafed us by the gospel, viz., that which Abraham and the fathers and kings have desired to see and could not.

The gospel is a good news, and therefore this commendeth it unto us, as to be so much the more desired of us. And who is it that naturally is not desirous to hear good news, and will very much inquire of it, if not too much ; as that it may be well said of us, which the apostle saith of the Athenians, ‘Speak again ?’ Acts xvii. But, alas ! how backward are we to inquire of this news of the gospel ! We inquire of news out of England, France, Spain, and other places, but how much more ought we to be desirous and inquisitive of the news of our own country indeed, which the gospel bringeth ; for we are but strangers here in this life, and our own country is in heaven.

Again, we will be very desirous to hear other news, which yet may be uncertain, but this news of the gospel is most true and certain. Further, if good news come to us, which is confirmed to us from all quarters, we rejoice in it, and are the more desirous of it ; and if they should say that this news is not confirmed unto us, even by God himself, and by Christ, they should lie, and therefore this news is to be preferred before all news. The apostle proceeds further to prove it to be truth, because the gospel is come to them, and is preached through all the world.

Obj. But the papists object unto us thus : the gospel is not the truth, because it is but of late, for, say they, where was it before Luther and John Huss’s time ? but the gospel, say they, must be through all the world.

Ans. We must not always measure the church by the universality of it, as they affirm, for let us consider in the days before Christ, and especially in Abraham’s time, when the church was shut up in his household and family, and all the world was heathenish ; after it proceeded and the church was contained in a kingdom, one kingdom only had the knowledge of the truth, and none might preach the law in any place of the world besides. And howsoever Jonah preached, yet he preached judgment, not the gospel ; they could not be saved by it. But after the ten tribes fell away, and the tribe of Judah and Benjamin remained, and the Jews themselves failed, as in the time of Elias, and though there were seven thousand, yet in the view of men, even of Elias himself, they could not be seen.

Obj. But they will object further, that before Christ the church was concluded in one place, but after Christ it was to be dispersed over all the world.

Ans. But nevertheless it is not to be understood that all times of the gospel, and continually, it should be over the world, but our Saviour Christ saith that the end should not be yet, viz., of Jerusalem, before the gospel was to be preached over all the world, which began at Jerusalem, as the prophet testifieth,

Isa. ii. And therefore it was necessary that the word should go throughout the world indeed, but not generally at all times. But if they will have that to be the truth and the gospel which was preached in the whole world, then theirs is not the gospel, which was never in India, nor in Turkey, nor in any of the Greek churches; for the patriarch of Constantinople never embraced their religion; and therefore their gospel is not the true gospel. Our gospel is that which was spoken by the prophets, and hath been through the world; it is that which was taught and preached by the apostles, &c., and therefore ours is the true gospel. Another argument of the truth of the gospel he proveth by the fruits, for the gospel will shew itself by the fruits.

Oly. And they will object hereby that we have not the gospel, for where, say they, is your fruits? In the time of the popish religion, there was more alms, and not so much wickedness, as among the protestants.

Ans. Would to God they could not too rightly object that to us! But yet they cannot hereby prove our gospel to be none, or not the true gospel. For in the time of popery they lived in ignorance, in palpable and Egyptiacal darkness, wherein small sins could not be seen to be sins. Great sins, as blasphemy, infidelity, &c., were no sins; for there was no liberty in reading of the word. Now the light of the gospel discovereth sins that are committed under it, which in times of ignorance were not thought nor known to be sins. Again, we wish it might be found more truly, that if the sin in time of the gospel be punished under the gospel, then the gospel is quit and free from that accusation. Now by the gospel, the gospel appointeth the sins committed under it to be punished, and so much the more sharply, as because in the light they have been committed. And therefore those that have the charge in the commonwealth, and the ministers, are more earnestly to perform that duty more carefully, for the credit of the gospel. The ministers ought to inveigh the more vehemently against sin, and to reprove it out of the word of God, and the magistrates to see

it more severely punished. Thirdly, our gospel is proved indeed to be the gospel, because that in the gospel sins more break out than without the gospel, which is strange. But the apostle proveth it, for the preaching of the law, which goeth before the preaching of the gospel, presseth, saith he, the wicked, Rom. ii. And in the wicked it hath this effect, that it maketh them worse; for those that are truly called are but a few, and a little flock, and therefore the word must have an effect of condemnation in the greater sort. Fourthly, but the truth and fruit of the gospel doth appear in those that are truly called, for in them it bringeth forth holiness of life and good works. And therefore we be to them, that seeing any sins under the gospel lay it upon the gospel, whereas it is the corruption of men which is the cause of offences and transgression, and not the gospel. And therefore it sheweth their corruption which pass by those good men, and instruments of God's glory, the most religious and holy men, and will not behold the good things that are in the church. But the apostle proceeds further to confirm them more particularly, that whereas they might have doubted whether it was the same, that was preached to Macedonia and other churches, he answers, it is the very same with theirs, which was preached by Epaphras their minister. And so we may say of our faithful ministers, which have truly instructed us before, that our doctrine now is the same which was preached by them to us heretofore.

And Epaphras he describeth to be their 'dear fellow-servant, and a faithful minister of Christ,' &c. By that he giveth commendation unto him, thereby to maintain the honour and reputation of the minister to his people, that so they might be the better persuaded of his love.

Doct. This ought every good minister to do, to labour by all means to maintain the honour and reputation of other the true ministers of God, amongst their people and charges, that so their doctrine may be the better received of the people.

I, the only surviving [unclear] because the [unclear]
guides and it would be the worst thing in
the world if it became corrupted [unclear] but we
shall [unclear]

SERMON V.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, cease not to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be fulfilled with knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, and please him in all things, being fruitful in all good works, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, through his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.—COL. I. 9-11.

THE apostle having given thanks to God for the graces the Colossians had received, as, namely, for the grace of faith, love, and for the sincerity of both, that they were not vain and in show only, but true faith and sincere love, doth now also make his prayers unto God, that, as they had begun, they might go forwards till they came to the perfection God had appointed them.

The sum of these three verses is a prayer that the apostle doth make for the Colossians, for all manner of Christian conversation, and for all Christian duty whatsoever; so that in these three verses are shut up whatsoever may be required of a Christian man, so that the like prayer in so few words is scarce to be found in the Scripture again. Wherein these two

things are to be considered: first, the cause why the apostle prayeth; secondly, the prayer itself laid down in the rest of the text. For the first, for this cause, viz., because of that for which we have given thanks before, viz., your faith and love, because that it is wrought abundantly in you.

Doct. Whence we learn, that those that are called to the knowledge of the truth, and are endued with excellent gifts of faith, hope, and love, &c., are they for whom we ought most especially to pray, and as they are lift up higher by the Lord to heaven (as it were) to be as stars to the rest of the world, by so much the more are we to pray for them, that they may stand in the truth, and be daily increased in the gifts of God. And this is a common thing, often observed and mentioned in the Scripture, that those whom God hath advanced with graces he will be further gracious to them, and, therefore, we are more to regard them in our prayers. And, therefore, our Saviour saith, Luke viii. 18, those that have shall have more abundantly. And the same we see verified, that he that hath gained five talents hath five more, he that hath gained two hath two more, he that hath one, having hid it, and being judged to have it taken away, the king commandeth it to be given to him that had five, and they object that he hath five; he answers, he that hath shall have in abundance, Luke ix. 24, 26. And St James saith, God giveth 'without upbraiding,' James i. 5; he giveth without grudging or repining, or casting it in their teeth, which receive of him, for he doth not as men, who having bestowed much on a man, if he come again he will lay it in his dish, that he hath bestowed on him already this and this, and shall he give him more? But the Lord doth not so, but to whom he hath given much, he will yet give more. And therefore the Lord in some sort doth after the manner of men, from whence the proverb of our Saviour is taken, that when men are rich, others will give great gifts unto them; but the Lord doth after a far other manner, for the Lord feareth none, neither is beholden to any, as men are to those that are greater than they, and therefore for that cause bestoweth not his gifts.

The reasons why they that have received graces from God are more specially to be prayed for, and that those that are entered into the lists of Christianity are principally to be recommended unto God, are divers, and worthy to be considered. The first is in regard of themselves, for though they have received yet they still want, and therefore they are not so much to regard that they have, but also to regard that they want; for unless a man do look to his wants and corruption, though he have but one little grace, he will be lifted up against God and against men, and therefore to be prayed for. As we see in popery, that howsoever they have no gifts but natural and common, yet are they puffed up in the pride of their hearts, in this regard, that they boast they can merit at God's

hands. And therefore we are to consider that in those that have the greatest gifts, there are great wants and causes of humiliation, for which cause they have need to be prayed for.

Another reason is in regard of other men, lest they be lifted up above others, which is done, in that by seeing our own weaknesses and infirmities, we may be kept from not being lift up against others, and in regard of their infirmities to contemn them. And therefore the apostle saith, if any man be fallen by occasion into any fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1. And therefore it is necessary to see our sins, that we may be the more able to bear with the wickedness of others.

Thirdly, In regard of the enemy, for those that are entered into Christianity, and are endowed with the graces of God, and are entered into the gospel and profession of God and godliness, the devil is most busie to prevent the same, and to sow tares by and by after good seed is sown, Mat. xiii.

The church being with child, that is, desirous and taking pains to bring forth Christians and children unto God (for it asketh great pains to beget a Christian), we see the devil is waiting and leering to devour them, when they come out, as the kite hovereth over the chickens, to devour them when they are young, Rev. xiii. So the devil is ready to devour the children of God at the first when they are young, and tender, and new born, for when they are strong he doth not so much assault them.

Fourthly, A principal reason why we are to pray for them is, because a Christian, by reason of his profession, as it were, carrieth in his forehead that name of God, and therefore the falls of him, more than of any other, do tend to the dishonour of God, and are turned against God himself. Indeed, it is a shame that the fall of the servant should be laid upon the master, for if a master or father having laboured to bring their son or servants up in the fear of God, it is a shame that the fault should be laid on the parent or master; for we usually say, if one thus brought up do fall in his life, their parents or masters have done their part, but he is an ungracious child or servant. But men do not so to God, for if any of his children fall, they lay it straight and impute it unto God himself. And therefore we ought the more to pray for them that are exalted by the Lord, that by their falls the gospel of God may not be dishonoured. And as they are placed in higher place, and are endued with greater gifts, so the more earnestly we ought to pray for them. And therefore let us examine whether, when we have a minister to enter and come unto us to instruct us, we have commended him to the Lord, or whether we have been thankful for any blessing that we have received by our minister.

Doct. We, saith the apostle, pray. If the minister pray for the people's increase and growing forward,

much more ought the people to pray for themselves, for the going forward in grace, that the good word begun in them should increase, and proceed till it be ripe.

Thus much of the cause ; the prayer followeth, for all things necessary for a Christian.

Doct. All good things, whatsoever we have, come from God. We have of ourselves no knowledge of God, nor of the graces of God, no strength to enter or continue in the ways of God ; but we must have it from God himself, which is proved by the apostle's prayer, for none pray for that they have themselves. And therefore we see here the opinion of the philosophers vain, yet in one part true, in that they held none should pray for that they had, but in that they prayed not for virtues, because, said they, men have virtues of nature, and therefore they prayed to their gods only for things of life. But their opinion is false, that any virtue is of nature ; for we have no good thing in us by nature, 1 Cor. iv. 7, but by the gift of God. But we learn that 'whatsoever good thing we have is of God,' James i. 17, especially which concern the kingdom of God, and therefore to be often asked of him alone. This serveth to confute the error of popery, who will make ourselves to have free will to good, or any good things of ourselves ; and not only to confute the opinion of popery, but the practice of popery in us still ; for though in our judgment we nourish not that opinion of popery, but confess, and approve, and acknowledge these graces proceed from God, yet in our hearts and practice we nourish it, wheras we do not use the means of increase in the grace of God in us, in praying, in diligent hearing the word, and using and frequenting the

exercises of religion, which is the most dangerous thing of all. He desires, first, that they may be filled with all knowledge. This is the first thing in Christianity, that a man have knowledge and understanding ; for though a thing be good, yet being not of knowledge, it is evil to him that doth it. This knowledge is set out by two words : the one signifieth to judge between things, what is good, what evil, what is holy, what profane. And not only he requires to judge of the things themselves, but of the means which are to be used for the doings of men ;* for men often discern and judge well the things, but fail in the means. Sarah, she believed well and judged well, that there should be a blessed seed, Gen. xviii., but she judged evil, and failed in the means, for she despaired in herself, being old, and therefore gave to Abraham her maid. So Rebecca, she judged well of the blessing which should be to Jacob, better than Isaac did ; yet of the means she judgeth not rightly, and therefore abuseth her husband, and maketh her son abuse him, by a lie. Another word is here used, which signifieth not only to judge of the things and the means, but also to judge rightly of the persons, times, and places, with other circumstancies, which is a necessary thing in Christianity. For it is not enough to know of the things and means to do them, but of the circumstances, when, where, and before whom to do them : as to know to what person he is to speak, and when, &c. As for example, Abigail, when she saw her husband was drunken, 1 Sam. xxv. 37, she would not reprove him in his drunkenness, but doth it afterward, where we see the time is to be rightly judged of.

* Qu. 'doing of them ?' — Ep.

SERMON VI.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, cease not to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be fulfilled with knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding : that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, and please him in all things, being fruitful in all good works, and increasing in the knowledge of God.
—COL. I. 9, 10.

IT hath been said that of this place there are two parts : one the cause of the prayer and supplication that Paul and his company did make ; the other, the prayer itself.

Of the cause we have heard, and somewhat of the petition itself ; and thus far we have spoken of this notable prayer, the like whereof, in so few words, is scarce to be found in the Scripture.

Having understood what is the first point of Christianity, to have knowledge, and to be filled with knowledge, which is a metaphor taken from vessels which are filled ready to run over, so the apostle requireth of all men to be full of knowledge. And, therefore, the prophet, speaking of the time of the gospel, saith, Isa. xix., men shall be as the waters, which shall ever

regorge of their waters to the fields. And, therefore, we may condemn the church of antichrist, which were so far from nourishing knowledge, as that the chief point of their religion was to maintain ignorance.

But let us come to ourselves, let us examin whether we be able to discern between sweet and sour, nay, between that which hath a show of good and ill, evil from good, and not only of the foulest and grossest, but of the least sins, that we be able to discern them to be sins : this discerning spirit must be in us. And we must discern between good and good also, which is more good, which less ; and in evil to see the least evil that can be, which every Christian ought to do. Indeed, the world usually doth not discern of evil things, &c., but God's children do ; for they look into

the sin as a man into a crystal glass, wherein a man may see the least mote, even as well as a man can by his taste discern meats and drinks. Indeed, in matter of meat and drink we can soon feel whether it be sweet or sour, salt or ill-savoury ; and yet in sins, though as great as mountains, we cannot discern them.

This of the first point. The next is, that they 'walk worthy of God.' This is another point of Christianity, and a far greater ; for knowledge indeed is necessary, but with it must be joined practice, without which knowledge is unprofitable, nay, rather hurtful. And it may be said that a man knows so much in Christianity as he practiseth. If ye be learned any whit in the school of Christ, ye have learned this, to lay down the old man, the flesh and rags of the old corruption, and put on the new robes of holiness, shewing that nothing is learned without practice ; for, when men see you practise nothing, they say you have learned nothing of the minister. The prophet, speaking of Zion set on a mountain, in the time of the gospel, saith, Isa. ii., they shall exhort one another to go up. Why ? To hear. And to what end ? To walk in the way we are taught. So that we are in Christianity to know how we may practise. Indeed, in some knowledge, as of the arts, &c., knowledge may be profitable without practice, but in matters of God and godliness, it is nothing without practice. The practice of a Christian is set out in general, and in particular.

In general, 'to walk worthy of God.' What meaneth the apostle by this, we shall consider better of it by comparing it with other places. The apostle to the Ephesians saith, Eph. iv. 1, 2, every man is to 'walk worthy of the calling whereunto he is called ;' and he exhorts the Philippians to walk worthy of the gospel, Philip. i. 27. So that this is set down in three sorts : to 'walk worthy of our calling,' to 'walk worthy of the gospel,' and to 'walk worthy of God.'

First, To 'walk according to the gospel,' signifieth, to be spiritual and holy, as the gospel is holy and spiritual.

Secondly, To 'walk according to our calling,' is spoken by a similitude taken from men ; because in that calling a man is, he will carry himself according to his place. A gentleman will not walk basely, as others do ; and a magistrate will do according to his estate, and a prince likewise. And shall not the children of God, being called to be children of God, and the sons of the Most Highest, walk as the children of God ? And therefore we see it marked on David as a reproach, that he did carry himself like a madman, in Achish his court, 1 Sam. xxi. 13. And is it not a shame for a Christian to carry himself so basely in sin ? For sin is the vilest thing that can be ; it is a most base thing to be a slave to sin ; there is no drudgery so loathsome which can be compared to it.

Thirdly, To 'walk worthy of God.' Here the apostle declareth, that he that maketh light of the gospel maketh light of God himself, and walketh unworthy of

God. It may be asked what that worthiness is ? It is set forth to be a walking in all manner of pleasing of God, if we study to please God in everything, which is a very notable thing : 1. To please God, then to please him in all things which we know ; to do that which we know may please God, and to set ourselves against anything that we know may displease God ; for men usually do naturally take delight to please themselves, and to seek for those things which may be most according to their own hearts, pleasant to their own eyes. And therefore Solomon, in Ecclesiastes, saith to the young man, mocking him, Eccl. xi. 9, ' Go to, rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart.'

Another sort of men walk to please the world, and care not what they may do, so they may please those whose favour they desire ; but 'if I should please men, I should not be the servant of God,' saith the apostle, Gal. i. 10. And as we are to please God, so, in all things, we ought to do it ; at the least, to wrestle and strive with ourselves to the obedience of God's will in all things. And if, in doing the will of God, the world be displeased, we need not to care, but to go forward. For albeit the apostle saith, as much as we can with pleasing God we are to please all men, Rom. xv., yet if we cannot please men, but displease God, we are not to care for men's displeasure in regard of God's ; for St Paul saith, 1 Cor. iv., ' I care not for man's judgment.'

Examine ourselves, therefore, we ought, whether we please ourselves or the world more than God, or no.

It followeth, ver. 10, 'being fruitful in all good works ;' that is, bringing forth every good fruit. This is the same with the former, but it explaineth the other by a metaphor, if we bring forth good fruit in every good work, where he compareth men to fruitful creatures, as sheep, especially bringing forth two lambs, or to trees bringing forth good fruit. The children of God are, in Isa. lxi. 3, called oaks of righteousness, in that they are strong, and stand against all temptations and tempests, and like oaks in steadiness of profession. So also in regard of the excellent fruit, they are compared to the vine, which is accounted in the Scripture of all trees a most excellent tree, and most profitable, sweet, and pleasant, as also plentiful, and therefore in regard of the goodness and abundance, we are to like of it. And therefore our Saviour saith, John xv. 2, ' I am the vine, and my Father the husbandman,' to dress the vine. And the vine is singular, and most excellent in regard of the fruit, for else it is good for nothing, not for to make a pin, but for the fire, Ezek. xv. 2 ; so Christians which profess God and the gospel, if they bring forth no fruit and please not God, they are the worst of all men, worse than the Jews, Turks, and heathen, let them brag what they will of the word, and sacraments, &c. And they must bring forth much fruit, viz., in every good work, and therefore it is said the Father doth trim that vine, to

make it bring forth more fruit, John xv. 2. It was required always that the children of God should bring forth fruit, but much more in the time of the gospel. And therefore the prophet saith, the least, basest, and weakest of the people of God, at that time, shall be as David, and he that is as David shall be as an angel of God, Zech. xii. 8. We know how valiant and courageous David was, so shall the weakest in the gospel.

To increase in knowledge is another point of walking worthy of God; as to be endowed with the graces of God, so to increase (both the ministers and others) in the knowledge of God, that is, in the knowledge of the will of God, and to be quick-sighted in the same. In the beginning of the book of Proverbs there is a saying, which may be referred to all the Scripture, Prov. i. 4, that the Proverbs of Solomon are such as the least child that hath wit, and the hardest man of capacity, the simplest may profit by it to knowledge, and there is not the wisest man in the world but may learn wisdom thereby, and may wax more wise; and so it is to be said of all the books of the Scripture.

Obj. If they be full, then they need not to increase.

Ans. Their fulness is not a perfect fulness, for we know in part, &c. For as there is a great difference between the understanding of a child, and of one of riper years, 1 Cor. xiii., so we are not always to be children in Christianity.

There is (as we have heard) required of us knowledge and practice. Lastly, there is besides these, constancy to continue in the good thing we know and practise; and yet no strength is of ourselves. The apostle tells us where we must have strength: in the power of God, in his glorious power, for we have sore enemies; for, first, we have a corruption within us, which is compared to an excessive lump of flesh and fat hanging on us, which we cannot cast off at our pleasure, Heb. xii. 1, which we might do, if it were tied only at our back, or girdle, and therefore we must have strength to carry it and to wield it.

The world is ready by temptation, by illusions, examples, and discouragements, to hinder us. And the devil being a strong enemy, laboureth to circumvent us, and therefore we had need to have this glorious strength from God, which we cannot have of ourselves.

And having entered a good course, it becometh us to go forward. For better not to begin, than having entered not to proceed.

Lastly we must have long patience, ver. 11, to bear the things which come hard unto us, whether they be grievous or of long continuance, as the word signifieth; and that with joy and comfortableness, as the apostles, when they had been whipped and scourged, rejoiced greatly that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, Acts v. 41.

SERMON VII.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, that is, the forgiveness of sins.—COL. I. 12-14.

UNTO the prayer that the apostle made for the Colossians, he doth now add the thanksgiving, which ought not to be separated; whereby he setteth forth the salvation which is offered us in Christ. As if the apostle should thus speak;—

And as we give not over praying for you, so do we not cease to give thanks to God the Father, because it is he which by his Holy Spirit hath made us fit to have a part in the inheritance of saints, whom, whether we consider as they are in the world, by reason of their perfect blessedness, may well be said, that they are in light, ver. 12.

This part of our inheritance standeth first, in that God hath with a merciful hand pulled us out both of the present darkness of ignorance and disobedience, and from that which is to come, even the fearful punishment of them both. And, secondly, it standeth in that the same God hath translated us into the kingdom of his most dear Son, which being here begun in this life, shall be accomplished in the life to come. In which his dear Son we have a full redemption, whereof one part is our justification, which we have already received, waiting for that which remaineth, even the redemption of our bodies, ver. 13.

All which redemption is purchased unto us in the obedience of the Son; which obedience was most specially and most signally declared in the shedding of his blood, ver. 14.

Here are two things to be considered, the actors of salvation coming from God simply considered in the three persons, ver. 12, 13, and from Christ, God and man, ver. 14.

So that the scope and drift of the apostle is to set forth unto us the salvation prepared for us, set forth in two sorts: one is proceeding from God the Father by his Spirit, the principal working cause,

And by Christ Jesus the material or meritorious cause of our salvation. For the first, what God the Father by his Spirit hath done for us, it appeareth in that he, viz., that God the Father, hath fitted us for a portion among the saints in light.

So that salvation is a portion among God's saints, which portion is in light; where we see that the state of God's children is compared to a part or portion, and that by lot, viz., an inheritance, as it was by lot. It is so said, because that in the old law the people of God used to divide their inheritances by lot, as in the

dividing of the land of Canaan ; which Joshua and the priests, and the chief elders, did cast lots for the inheritance of the tribes.

Doct. Seeing that it is an inheritance, it sheweth that it is by grace, and not by any merit. For even as the father giveth the child his land, and inheritance, not for any desert, but for his love to him, though he never deserved, nor never will deserve so much at his hands ; and if it should be of desert, it might be that the servant should carry it away from the child, which may peradventure before have gotten for his master the best part of the inheritance, or which may have saved his master's life, and therefore the child hath not the inheritance of desert. And seeing it is no stipend, but an inheritance, which we have of God, we do not deserve it.

Doct. Again, here we learn that, sith our inheritance cometh to us by lot, wherein God only sitteth, judgeth, and directeth, it is not by any labour of ours, but only by the grace and favour of God alone. Sith, then, it is so, let us see what our duty is, for as the prophet saith, Ps. xvi., 'the Lord is my lot, my portion,' it is a fair and beautiful inheritance, and hath fallen unto him in an excellent ground. And seeing our inheritance is the same with David's, and as excellent as his was ; and yet it is more notably set forth, 1 Peter ii., that whereas the Jews were scattered from their inheritance into Pontus, &c., this is now trodden down under foot by wicked men, this cannot be so. Again, that is faded and decayed, 1 Peter v., this can never decay and perish ; and therefore seeing our inheritance is so excellent, and so precious, what care ought we to have to keep it and maintain it ? for as we use in proverb, It is my free-hold, and therefore I must look to it ; so seeing this our free-hold, we are to have special care and regard above all things to keep it sure.

' He hath fitted us for this ;' wherein he doth plainly teach us, that there is no readiness, aptness, and fitness in our own nature, and therefore we must have our fitness from God. A man is fit for his father's inheritance, but for God's inheritance we are not so, for we are (even all the world, in regard of God's matters) naturally but blind born, Isa. xlvi. 7. Again, though we had our sight, yet we are lame, and cannot reach so much as a hand to it, nor go one foot to it, and have both these naturally, and therefore cannot by us be cured, as the blind man said, John ix. Again, which is more, we are dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1, and therefore must be new creatures, which we cannot make ourselves. And therefore the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii., that we are not able to do good, because we are not apt nor fit to do good, and therefore what fitness soever we have, it cometh from God. And this ought to cause and stir us to thankfulness unto God, as the apostle here doth. For seeing we are both made fit by God for his inheritance, and seeing he hath bestowed it freely upon us, therefore we are

the more carefully to be thankful, which we should not be bound to do, if it were of ourselves. What this inheritance is, he sheweth in making it consist of two parts.

1. Pulling us out of darkness.

2. Carrying us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. ' Pulled us,' thereby sheweth that he useth great strength to deliver us, which confirmeth to us the doctrine before, of being unable ourselves to do. And therefore he delivers us, and pulls us out as of a prison, which are usually dark, Isa. xlvi. And more notably he saith, that he pulls us ' out of the pit without water,' Zech. ix. 11, setting down and comparing this prison to a pit or dungeon, wherein is only dirt, wherein we stick, where is no water, where he describeth our damnable estate ; for seeing we are cast into such a prison, but especially being cast by God himself, in his just judgment, how is it possible that we should deliver ourselves ? And therefore our Saviour saith, John vi., ' No man can come to me, but he must be drawn by my Father.' A man may be in prison, and have no will nor affection to come out, and therefore it maketh to the glory and praise of God, in doing the whole work of our redemption. And if, after the church is called to Christ, she findeth such dulness and heaviness in herself, that she must be drawn, Cant. ii., though they have received grace and are drawn out of the pit, how shall they have any strength to get out, which are not yet drawn out of the pit and dirt ? So that the first part is to be delivered from blindness, from ignorance, hardness of heart, the wrath and judgments of God, and condemnation.

2. The second part is the making us partakers of his kingdom ; and as the darkness we are delivered from is partly in this life, and was after to be accomplished in hell, if we had not been delivered, so the kingdom of God is begun in this life, and is within us, and shall be perfected in heaven after this life ; so that we see those that are the children of God indeed, will in this life endeavour to give obedience to the commandments of God. And therefore, though men profess themselves the servants of God, yet their lives being not according to God, they are no subjects of God ; for as he that will profess himself to be subject to the king, and yet in his deed will yield obedience to the king of Spain, and serve him, he is doubtless a traitor, so it is with those that profess themselves to be Christians, yet, if in their lives and behaviour they do not shew forth the fruits of it, they are nothing but rebels to God, and servants to the devil, come they never so diligently to the word, and sacraments, &c.

Hitherto we have heard what these two persons, God the Father and God the Son, have wrought in our salvation. Now followeth the matter of our redemption, viz., ' in him,' viz., in his beloved Son, ' we have redemption, because we have forgiveness of sins.'

Here is set forth in whom, by whom, and in what price, we have our redemption. For many men will confess that they are saved by Christ, but when it comes to the means, there they fail ; for the enemies of the truth will say that they are saved by Christ, but yet they are also saved by their merit and free will ; and they will say that the good works they have, they have of God, and yet they have no good works at all, because they have it not by the means which God here hath laid down. Our Saviour Christ is he that hath redeemed us, and paid the price for us, and that wholly.

Obj. How shall our Saviour Christ be the salvation of all men, seeing he was not man at all times, for how can his blood deliver a man, when it was not shed ?

Ans. His blood shed in due time hath such power and strength, because it is not the blood of man, but of God, and therefore it reacheth to all the times before. It is not only belonging to them that come after, but to Adam and the fathers, and therefore it is said that the death of our Saviour Christ reacheth to the former sins, Rom. iii.

Quest. Secondly, How can our Saviour Christ, being but one man, redeem by his death so many, even all that are to be saved ? For as in wars, when prisoners are taken, one man can redeem but one man, and therefore how can our Saviour, being one, redeem all the saints from the beginning to the end of the world ?

Ans. The apostle answers, Rom. v., that Adam being but one man, seeing his own* sin was able to condemn all men, he being but a man and not a God ; and therefore shall not Christ, being the Son of God, by his so many sufferings, be able to save those that are to be saved ?

Quest. Thirdly, Our sins deserve punishment eternal, without end, being committed against the eternal God ; now the troubles of our Saviour Christ were but for a time, he being about thirty-three years on earth, how can his short sufferings countervail eternal death ?

Ans. He was not man only, but also God, and therefore was able, at once, to satisfy for all the punishment due for evermore to his children and servants, for his infinite Godhead did sustain his manhood in suffering, especially on the cross and the night before. Therefore it is said, ‘by the eternal Spirit he offered up the sacrifice for us,’ Heb. v., suffering that, and

* Qu. ‘one’?—ED.

bearing that, which men and women should have suffered for ever in themselves.

Obj. But our adversaries of the Church of Rome object, we are not saved by Christ from all our sins, and therefore they abused that place in the 3d of the Romans, expounding the former sins to be original, and the rest to be satisfied and wrought out by us. Again they say the punishment we are to work out, he having taken away the sin original.

Sol. But we have proofs for this against them, for saith the apostle, 1 John ii., ‘he is the propitiation for sins,’ viz., even all. And in John he is ‘the Lamb of God that taketh away our sins,’ John i. 36 ; not that *did*, but that *doth* take away ; as those that were, so also those that are.

Again, for that they say Christ taketh away the sins only, and not the punishment, they do greatly abuse God himself, for in Isa. liii. Christ hath suffered the punishment ; and therefore this were to accuse God himself of falsehood and cruelty, that would promise the taking away of our sins, and forgiveness of our debts by Christ, and yet would exact the utmost farthing at our hands. What an unjust thing were this !

Obj. They prove this by David, that for his sins he was punished by persecution at the hands of his son, and driven from his kingdom ; and after it is told him, his sins were forgiven.

Ans. But it were injury to punish sin twice. Now seeing the punishment is borne in Christ, the children of God are not punished (for that were infinite, and could not be suffered), but only chastened. For saith God, ‘thoso I love, I chasten,’ Rev. iii., so that if it come from love, it is no punishment, Heb. xii.

Again, from the effect it appears it is no punishment, because it is for their good, on whom it is laid, and therefore no punishment. For punishments are to destruction.

And the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii., compareth all the afflictions that God layeth on his servants to the corrections which a father layeth on his child. For a father correcteth his child for two causes : first, that he might be better, for though he do him never so much injury, even to burn his house, yet if he love his son, he will only correct him, seeking to bring him to good order.

Another cause is that by his example and correction, the rest of his children may be kept the better in awe. Even so the Lord dealeth with his children as a loving Father, chastising them for their good.

SERMON VIII.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature : for by him were all things created which are in hearen, and which are in earth, things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him and for him : and he is before all things, and in him all things consist : and he is the head of the body of the church : he is the beginning, and the first-born of the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence : for it pleased the Father that in him should

all fulness dwell: and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, and to set at peace through the blood of his cross, both the things in earth and the things in heaven.—COL. I. 15–20.

THE holy apostle having entered into the declaration of the redemption brought unto us, sets forth the causes.

First, what God the Father hath done for us; secondly, what God the Son hath done for us. And now he cometh to a notable description of God the Son, to shew unto us that in him we have a full and plentiful redemption. As if the apostle should say,

This Christ (that you may know what a plentiful and rich redemption you have in him, to the end you may rest in him alone) is thus set forth unto you as followeth. As touching his person, standing of both natures, he is the most lively and express image and character of God, not only of his qualities (if yet there were any quality in the Godhead), but of his very nature and essence, in whom we may behold God, which is invisible, and touch him, that is insensible; which is the principal heir of all the creatures in the world, in whom we that believe have right unto them, ver. 15.

For by him are all things created in heaven and earth, things visible and invisible, even the angels themselves, to the worshipping of whom you are seduced; and amongst them, all, of what degree or place whatsoever they be, whether they sit in thrones, or whether they have lordship, principality, or power, over other angels, and all things else, were both made by him and for him, ver. 16.

Wherefore he is before all things, and all things have their continuance, and are upholden by him, ver. 17.

And as touching his office, which he executeth in respect of both natures, he is the head of the church, which is his body; and he is the first-fruits and first-begotten of the dead, not only in respect that himself is risen, but also in that he is the author of our resurrection, which is here begun, and shall be perfected in the last day, when he shall change these vile hodies, and make them like his glorious body, ver. 18.

For in him it is the good pleasure of God that the grace of the Spirit should without measure fully dwell, that by him he might reconcile unto himself all things, making peace by the death of his cross between God and all men, whether it be they which, having believed in him before his coming, are now in heaven, or others, which being on earth, do believe in him, ver. 19.

Here there is a description of Christ, God and man, touching his person, whereby he governeth all things; and his office, whereby he governeth his church.

Snm; a description of the excellency of our Saviour Christ, which consisteth of two parts.

One touching the government of our Saviour Christ, which he hath over all things in heaven, earth, and hell; the other, touching the particular rule over his church.

First, He is called the image of the invisible God, that cannot be seen by the eye of man. And not only is meant here; but none can so much as come to the understanding of God by the eye of the mind, but by our Saviour Christ we see the Godhead. Those that were alive when he was on earth did see the Godhead in him, and we shall see God in him in heaven. This is proved by divers places, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A wonderful mystery, that God, which is a light that no man can see, which is incomprehensible, is yet seen and comprehended of a mortal man, so far forth as man is able, 1 John iii., John i. 18, 1 Tim. vi. 16. ‘None hath seen God at any time,’ nor can come to the knowledge of him, ‘but the only begotten Son of the Father hath revealed him.’ John xiv., wheras one of the apostles saith to him, ‘Shew us thy Father,’ our Saviour answers, ‘O Philip, hast thou been with me so long, and hast not seen the Father?’ otherwise invisible. And this is a wonderful mystery, and an exceeding mercy, that God, which cannot be conceived in the capacity of men, should yet be seen of us.

Quest. Whether in the body and manhood, or Godhead, of Christ is it seen?

Sol. Not in the manhood, for it is too weak to express the Godhead of his Father; and touching the Godhead, he cannot be comprehended in himself, being equal with his Father, and as incomprehensible as the Father, being one with him; and therefore, he is understood of us, and is the image of the Father, as his Godhead and manhood are both joined together.

Quest. What great thing is this, that Christ is the image of God, seeing Adam, a bare man, was the image of God? And the woman is image of man, and man is the image of God, 1 Cor. xi., even in this wretched estate, and therefore no such wonderful a thing to be the image of God.

Ans. Adam is called the image of God in regard of some sparkles of the image which God had engravened in him; by creation he was not the image of the essence of God, nor had any of his essence. Again, man is said to be the image of God, in regard of the rule which God hath given him over his wife; whereas our Saviour Christ hath in him the essence of his Father, being perfect God, having the Godhead joined to his manhood in one and the same person.

Obj. Here we are to answer an objection of certain heretics. If he be the image of God, then he is not God, for the image and the thing is not all one.

Ans. We do not understand an image here to be that which doth represent the accidents or lineaments of things (as images of earthly things do), for the images that are made of a man cannot represent the essence, but the accidents and lineaments of the body of a man; but Christ is such an image of his Father,

which is the thing itself, as the word is used in other places, 1 Cor. xv.; as we are after the image of Adam, being the thing itself. Again, Heb. ix. 23, these things, viz., ceremonies, being the shadows of those things which were the truth, being not the image itself, and therefore their argument is a false reason. For the understanding of this, to know how Christ is the image of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, and of himself as God, viz., that he in the Godhead and manhood did represent the infinite power of God, it may appear by that in John i. We have seen him as God himself, for in all his words, and works, and whatsoever, he shewed such virtue and power, viz., even of God himself. He commanded the devils, and they came out; commanded the seas and winds, and they obeyed, which none, angel or men, could ever do, and therefore there appeareth the image of God.

Again, there is an infinite mercy set forth unto us in Jesus Christ in saving his children, in that by him we are saved. Again, an infinite justice revealed to us in our Saviour Christ, who hath borne in his own person for us the infinite wrath of God, and hath made satisfaction for us in his own blood. And in that one action of his suffering appeared both the infinite justice and mercies of God, and therefore the image of God.

This may be considered after this sort, for seeing the angels themselves stoop to look into this mystery, we may, by this mean example of the profane history, see some small resemblance of this thing serving somewhat to open it; and yet take heed that with reverence we consider this so deep a mystery of our Saviour Christ.

There is in the histories recorded a king,* which his son by adultery having transgressed the law, and should have lost his eyes, by the importunity of the people was entreated not to do it; yet because the king would not have the law broken, he found out a way to keep the law, and because he would not have them to have a blind king, he put out one of his son's and one of his own eyes. Where was justice, in that the king would execute the law, and mercy in sparing his son; but this was imperfect justice and mercy.

But in Christ both are perfect.

Doct. Now in that Christ is the image of his Father, this teacheth us that we are to content ourselves by the knowledge of the Godhead which is revealed unto us in Christ and by Christ, and not to go to seek him any further.

Inheritor, and heir of all creatures, ver. 15; for howsoever it be otherwise interpreted, yet it seemeth rather to be this: because as in the law the eldest son was heir of all, or of the most part of the father's possessions, so Christ he is the heir of all, and those that

have anything have it by him, and have right by him. His father hath put all things under his feet, Ps. viii., Heb. i., 1 Cor. xv.

Doct. He that hath any possession or power never so great, if he have it not by Christ, it is none of his; he is an usurper, whatsoever he be; and therefore it condemneth them that get not their goods with good consciences. Nay, though they may come to it by their parents, yet having not the testimony of the Spirit of God that he is the child of God, it is not his. Therefore, Prov. xv., 'Better is a little with the fear of God, than great treasure with trouble.' And this is the reason, Ps. xxxvii. 16, that better a little with God's fear, because if he be the child of God that hath it, it is his own, and he may use it; but if he be not, be he never so wealthy, he shall answer the Lord for it, and his judgment shall be the greater for it. For if he that eateth brown bread shall answer for it, if he be wicked, much more shall he that feedeth and fareth of the best, as he abuseth more of God's blessings, and therefore let them look unto it that have received any from God.

As Christ is the image of God, and heir of all things, so also it is said that he made all things. Which he proveth by a division, 'whether in heaven or earth,' meaning underneath, or above also; and if any make a doubt of that, he taketh it away, and saith, 'whether visible or invisible;' whatsoever things were made were made by him.

Visible and invisible. He useth this upon occasion of an error in the Colossians, that they worshipped angels, departing from the truth, and therefore the apostle standeth upon this point, handling angels of what order or degree soever.

Whether thrones, viz., such as sit in thrones, or lordship, viz., which have lordship, or whatsoever they were, were made by him, and therefore not to be worshipped; but of that afterward, when we come to the error; but here we learn how fitting that good order is, how acceptable it is unto God, in that the angels, which are without sin, and have no such need as we, are not without order; and seeing they do use order, how much more are we to seek for order, which are so corrupt and confused. And if inferior angels, in regard of order, obey those over them, much more should we be obedient to those over us. And if wicked spirits, to the accomplishing of their wicked purposes, have their orders, some to command, some to obey, therefore much more ought we. And yet here ariseth comfort for us, that if the wicked angels observe order for to hurt us, yet the good angels, much more for our defence. And the devils, though they are very strong, and exceeding subtle, yet it is not to be doubted but by their fall they have lost much of that strength which they had by their creation.

* This similitude is warily to be used.

SERMON IX.

For by him were all things created which are in hearen, and which are in earth, things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and in him all things consist: and he is the head of the body of the church; he is the beginning, and the first-born of the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell: and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, and to set at peace through the blood of his cross both the things in earth, and the things in heaven.—COL. I. 16–20.

HERE is set forth, as we have heard in these and them that went before, the description of our Saviour Christ, of his excellent and glorious estate, consisting in the description of his person and his office.

The person of Christ standeth of both natures, both of the Godhead and manhood; for those things here spoken can neither belong to the Godhead apart nor to the manhood apart.

The last point spoken of out of the beginning of this part we are to consider further of, viz., touching the angels, called here powers, dominions, principalities, &c.; where we observed, that seeing there is such an order among the angels, such excellent creatures have some superiors, others inferiors. And for so much as angels are subject to higher angels, much more ought men to be subject to their governors and princes, having far more need. This was for instruction. Another point for consolation was delivered upon this question, whether the blessed angels have more strength than the devils.

Ans. Notwithstanding the devils have great power and strength, and do great things, yet they have not such wisdom, such power, nor strength to do mischief as the good angels have to defend the children of God. The reason is, that as men, falling from their estate, lost much of their wisdom, wit, strength, &c., even so the wicked angels are, by their fall, disabled of that power, and wisdom, and strength in comparison of the blessed spirits. For further proof of this, read Rev. xx. 2. One angel (not said to be an archangel, or principal angel, but a meaner angel) is said to take the dragon, the principal devil (by the neck, as it were), and bind him. For wheras the devil, at the increase of the church, about thirty years after the ascension of our Saviour Christ, began to rage mightily against the church of God, and would have clean devoured it, had not the Lord laid him on his back, it is said that an angel took him and bound him up for a thousand years.

He proceedeth to set forth the excellency of our Saviour Christ, in that he saith, ver. 16, ‘By him were made all things;’ where is noted the excellency of his personage, that he must needs be indeed a meet and sufficient one for the great work of the redemption, because he was the Creator of all; and if that was such an excellent work, then the spiritual

re-creation and regeneration is a far more excellent thing, and can be performed by none but by such a one which was God; and therefore condemns the papist, which is so wretched to take upon him power to redeem himself, and to help himself to heaven, nay, to help others by his good works, as they call them, of supererogation, or rather to be called of super-arrogation.

But is there any man that by his good works can create himself, or help in any part to the creation of himself? Much less, then, is a man able to do any thing in the matter of his redemption, as being not able to do any good thing; thus the Lord hath called and regenerated him. And as all the work of our creation dependeth on God, as here it is proved, so every part and jot of our redemption is in God, and by God alone. For howsoever before we be called we have life of body and motion, yet toward the kingdom of our Saviour Christ we cannot move a foot till the Lord bring us.

He hath the pre-eminence, ver. 17, and all things are made for him.

Doct. Where we see that our Saviour Christ is the *Alpha*, i.e. the beginning that made all, and the *Omega*, the end of all, for whom all things are ordained. And, therefore, how dare any challenge him, or reason and dispute against him? Shall the pot speak against the potter? Rom. ix. 20. For did not he make all, and did not he make them to his glory, Prov. xvi. 4, as it pleased him, whether to glorify himself in their salvation or destruction? And therefore what is it that wretches dare reason with God, why he made man to destruction?

But saith the prophet, Isa. xlv. 9, ‘Let the sherd reason with the sherd,’ not with the potter; and yet the potter gives only the form, not the matter, but God maketh both the matter and form.

All things are for him, ver. 18, viz., ourselves, our souls, our bodies, our honour, credit, children, goods, wit, strength, &c., are not to serve for ourselves, for our own pleasure and delight, to use as we list, much less for others, but only for the Lord, and for his service.

Usc. This, therefore, condemneth them which use their wits, honour, &c., for to serve themselves, and use the blessings of God for their own lusts; but if we will not serve God with them, he will make us to

serve him in our destruction. On the other side, if we honour him with them, he will serve and honour us, as it is in the gospel, that 'the faithful servant the master will cause to sit down,' &c., Luke xix.

By him all things stand, ver. 17. As he created all things, so he keepeth and preserveth all things, Heb. i. The heavens are kept, the earth stayed in the midst of all without any prop, only by the hand of God and of the Son of God, for living creatures: Acts xvii., 'In him all things live, move, and have their being.'

Use. And, therefore, if we will have comfort in our living here, we must look to have it continued of him, and by him alone.

Use. And if by reason that we are created, and preserved by him, it is matter sufficient to encourage us to be ready to glorify God, then much more ought our hands to be strengthened to glorify God, we being also re-created and born again, and therefore to employ our knowledge, wisdom, strength, and all in God's service, and that by so much the more as we have received more graces at the hand of God.

Thus much of the first part of this text. The second point, of the office of our Saviour Christ, is set forth in that he is called 'the head of his church ;' which we will come unto when we have understood the reason why our Saviour Christ, which is the first begotten of the creatures, &c., is here set down.

This is to prove unto us that our Saviour Christ is the fit and sufficient Messiah : for, first, because he is 'the image of God,' hereby it is proved that by him only, being in the bosom of his Father, God's will is revealed unto us.

Again, he is called 'the heir of all things ;' for else how could he make us the inheritors of the things of this life, much less of heaven ?

Again, he is called 'the ruler of all things ;' for were not he controller of the angels, of the heavens, of the earth, and of all things, that so he might subdue whatsoever should rise against the salvation of his children, they should be discouraged. John xvii., 'He hath the power of all flesh,' to master whatsoever should set itself against the salvation of his church ; and these are the causes why the apostle laboureth to set down the excellency of our Saviour by all these points.

Head of the church. Here is set forth the office of our Saviour Christ, the church being his body, *i.e.* the mystical body of Christ.

One office of our Saviour Christ, as he is the head of his church, is to be the prophet ; because, as from the head cometh wit and light to all the members, so all instruction of the kingdom of God cometh from Christ.

Secondly, he is the priest as he is the head of his church ; because, as from the head cometh all the life, and sense by the arteries, even so by Christ, as the head, all spiritual life floweth.

Thirdly, as the head ruleth all the other parts, so Christ is king over his church, to rule and govern them after his will ; signifying that whatsoever good the church hath, cometh from Christ.

For this cause he is called the root, not the sprig of David, because, whatsoever good thing David had he received from Christ. And hence it is that he is called in John a vine, John xv. 1, in whom all the branches meet, and of whom they receive life, so that if they be cut off they must needs die.

He is called the head of the church after in this epistle, and in the epistle to the Ephesians, chap. i. 23, where it is said to be 'his body, even the fulness of him that filleth all in all things ;' where is set forth the love of our Saviour Christ, that howsoever he perfecteth all things, yet he himself is not willing to be perfected without the church.

Doct. Here, then, we learn that, as we draw life, and all our life, from him alone, so we are taught that he alone is the head of the church, as he hath been proved before, by that he is the image of God, and created all things, &c. And therefore he that will challenge [to be] the head of the church, must challenge himself to be the image of God, must be before all things, must be he that hath created all things.

And therefore this must needs be a blasphemous thing, to attribute this to Peter. That howsoever he was an excellent man, yet he never arrogated this to himself. And we see that the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, making Peter such an excellent instrument of his glory, and foreseeing the wretched abuse of Peter to follow afterward, that he should, by reason that he was such a worthy man, be more esteemed than he ought, doth never set forth any excellent thing in Peter, but setteth forth also withal very notable and great special faults, and blots, and blemishes in him : as when he had made that worthy confession of his faith concerning our Saviour Christ, which our Saviour commended, he presently is brought in to dissuade our Saviour from suffering, which was as much as from the work of redemption, for which cause our Saviour rebukes him sharply, and calls him Satan, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' Mat. xvi. 23, Mark viii. 33 ; and again, when that he would, by reason of the strength of his faith, walk on the seas, he shews, as he shewed his great faith, so his great infidelity, Mat. xiv. 28, 31 ; and also, when he bragged that he would suffer with our Saviour, he most shamefully denied and forswore him, Mat. xxvi. ; and after all this was taxed by Paul for a point of hypocrisy, Gal. ii. 11-13.

And if this cannot without blasphemy be given to Peter, who, for all his great infirmities, was an excellent apostle of our Saviour Christ, much more blasphemous is it to impute it to the pope, a most wretched man.

And if they say the pope is a ministerial head and

deputy; what needeth Christ to have a deputy, being present himself? Mat. xxviii. 20. Therefore, John xiv. 16, I leave my Spirit; and, therefore, if he have any deputy, it is his own Spirit.

The beginning and first-begotten, ver. 18. Beginning, *i.e.* the fruits (first-begotten), *i.e.* both himself rose, and is the cause of the resurrection of all the children of God, 1 Cor. xv. 20. John xi., ‘I am the resurrection,’ *i.e.* the cause of the resurrection of his children. For as he is God, he is the cause of the resurrection of all men. But as he is the mediator and head of the church, he is the cause of the resurrection of his church; for if the head rise, the body must needs follow. And, therefore, as by one man all men fell, so by one all (*viz.*, that are saved) rise again, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

A part of this resurrection is in this life, by mortification and quickening wrought in them, which shall be perfected at the last resurrection, when they shall rise in glory. Indeed, then the wicked shall rise, but by the general power of his Godhead, not by the particular power or virtue of his mediation. *All fulness dwelleth.* This hath been spoken of in the 14th verse, we will only speak of that not then handled.

It pleased. It is only so to be set down, for ‘the Father’ is not in the Greek, howsoever it be of divines thought to be meant of the Father; yet it seemeth rather to be understood, that it pleased God the Father, God the Son himself, and the Holy Ghost.

Again, ver. 20, by reconciling, is meant to reconcile, not to his Father only, but to himself, and to the Holy Ghost also.

Another point not observed before; in that he saith, *by himself*, which may seem to be a surplusage of words, but in regard of the corruption that should arise, he saith that this sacrifice is to be offered ‘*by himself alone*,’ where we are to be referred to the further proof of it in the epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle saith, Heb. i. 3, that Christ hath ‘*by himself purged our sins*.’

All things. *Quest.* Why not *all men*? For men only are saved and reconciled unto God, having been his enemies.

Ans. True; for it is not meant of the angels, nor of the other creatures. And yet all these dumb and unreasonable creatures have restoration by the death of Christ. For the heavens, and earth, and all things shall be renewed, 2 Pet. iii. 13, and the sun shall have double the light it hath; and therefore the virtue of Christ’s sufferings reacheth even to them. But yet these cannot be said to be reconciled unto God, because they were never his enemies, howbeit, by reason of the sin of man, they were partakers with him of the curse of God. But by reconciling all things, is here meant all the children of God, that are already in heaven, or in earth, or shall be to the end of the world.

SERMON X.

And you which were in times past strangers and enemies, because your minds were set in evil works, hath he now also reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to make you holy and unblameable, and without fault in his sight.—COL. I. 21, 22.

THE apostle Saint Paul, having set forth unto us the rich redemption of the world by the blood of Christ, doth now shew how the same doth agree unto the Colossians themselves.

Wherefore, having reconciled all unto himself, he hath also reconciled you, which benefit, that it may the better be esteemed, consider what you were when he reconciled you, ‘strangers from God,’ yea, enemies in your very understanding, which is the chiefest, and therefore much more in other parts; which enmity was made manifest by your evil works, verse 21, I say, now he hath reconciled you (in his human nature like unto ours) by his death, to the end he might make you holy, and without spot, and blameless in all sincerity, as before himself, verse 22. And this reconciliation know no otherwise to belong unto you, unless you abide grounded and settled in faith, and be not carried away from the hope you have had in the gospel. The truth whereof appeareth in that so short a time it hath been preached to all nations under the cope of heaven, of which gospel I myself also am

a minister, verse 23. Wherein it ought not to dismay you that I am in bonds, seeing I myself do rejoice in it; seeing also it is not for redemption (which Christ himself alone hath wrought), but for the confirmation of your faith, and example of your patience. And seeing thereby are fulfilled the passions, which are yet wanting unto the body of Christ, which is the church, which must be like unto Christ her Head, in suffering, that it may be like unto him in glory. And finally, seeing it is not for your good alone, but for the good of the whole body of Christ, which is his church, ver. 24; whereof, as of the gospel I am a minister, and that by the ordinance of God, who hath committed a stewardship unto me, that in you also might be fulfilled the word of God, verse 25; I mean, the secret of the gospel, so worthily called, for that it hath been hidden from all times and generations hitherto, and now is made manifest, not to all, but to his saints, verse 26, even to as many as God of his good will would make known the glorious riches of this secret unto amongst the Gentiles, which glorious riches is

Christ in you ; the same alone by whom we may hope for glory, verse 27 ; the same also whom we preach, partly admonishing all sorts of men, partly teaching all sorts of men all heavenly wisdom, thereby to present men of all sorts perfectly wise and blessed through Jesus Christ, verso 28 ; whereunto I labour sore, striving forcibly, which yet would be unfruitfully, were it not that God worketh by his Spirit mightily, with my ministry, verse 29.

The sum of all this is, that the Colossians, in the general redemption of mankind by Christ, through the working of the Spirit, have their part, upon condition if they abide in the truth to the end.

The parts are, 1, a particular application of the common benefits of Christ's redemption unto the Colossians ; 2, an exhortation to perseverance, that they may be truly partakers of that redemption.

The sum whereof is to set forth unto us the benefit of God bestowed upon the Colossians, to the end that they should be holy.

Wherein we consider, first, the application of the benefits of Christ to the Colossians ; secondly, the end of this redemption, 'that they should be holy, without spot, and unblameable !'

For the application it appeareth herein, for when he saith, ' You hath he reconciled,' he declareth the wonderful kindness of God towards them, viz. the Colossians, for though that there be a redemption wrought, yet if the Colossians could not apply it to themselves, nor have any hope that it belonged to them, they were not better for it, nay, it is the worse, whenas a blessing being abroad is yet neglected, and not obtained of some, whenas others get it. And therefore our Saviour Christ, speaking to the obstinate Jews, saith, Luke xiii. 28, ' Ye shall see the prophets in heaven, and yourselves shut out ;' ye shall see it, arguing the greatness of the judgment.

Here, then, we are to learn to try whether we ourselves have any part or portion in the same, and whether we be not those which only shall see the same, and not feel it in ourselves, and that we are of those that enjoy it, and not such as only hear tell of it.

For even as if there should be a thousand rebels, and a pardon granted to some ten or an hundred, if a man know not that he is one of the men which should be pardoned, what should it profit him to know there is a pardon ?

And as if any should hear of a treasure found, and yet be not sure that he hath part in it, what availeth it him ? so it is in the case of our redemption, whenas we know not that this favour belongeth to us. And whenas we only can say that there are some that shall be redeemed, and can talk of the salvation of others, and not of our own, how can we be truly thankful ?

Use. This serveth to confute the papists, which say that this is a presumptuous doctrine, to be assured of our salvation. But we see the apostle dealeth other-

wise to the Colossians, for he assureth the Colossians of their redemption.

And it is far otherwise with the possession of our salvation than with worldly possessions, which possession may be lost, but this cannot be taken away.

Now, against the wretched opinion of the papists, we, out of Genesis xv. and xvii., are to consider that, seeing the Lord saith (making his covenant to Abraham), ' I am thy God, thou art my servant,' why should not the covenant of God make Abraham say again, ' Thou art my God, I am thy servant ? ' Hosea ii. 23, ' I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people ; and they shall say, Thou art my God.'

Quest. How could Saint Paul know this, seeing there are so many deceits and turnings of hypocrisy in a man's heart, that a man can hardly know anything of certain in himself ?

Ans. The apostle might know, and we may well know, that wheresoever God doth spread the banner of the gospel, there are some that are certainly called and elected.

Indeed, there are many that are reprobates and hypocrites ; but yet, so long as the gospel was there, the apostle might know that there were some elect.

Doct. Hereby we learn, that we are surely and undoubtedly to know, that wheresoever the gospel is preached, there is a church planted, and thereto are people which God hath chosen to save eternally.

Contrarily, this confuteth those, that for corruptions in the church will utterly deface the church of God, and make it to be no church, and forsake it. For where the gospel is preached by authority from God, there is Christ's throne erected.

Use. The use of this is to teach us, that when the Lord calleth unto us by his word, and stretcheth the arms of his gospel, to receive those that come, we are to go unto him, and receive him, lest, if we do not, he close his hands, and withdraw his gospel from us, and leave us in a desperate and miserable estate.

To the further setting forth of their excellent estate, he setteth down their cursed estate before, ver. 21.

Doct. Here, then, we learn, that to the end we may see the excellency of our happy estate in Christ, we are to see what a cursed and wretched condition we were in by our nature. And, indeed, we can never in any measure see the notable redemption of us by Christ, nor can never be thankful unto God, before that be felt of us. The full man, saith Solomon, loathes honey, the sweetest thing. And a man though sick, yet, if he feel not his disease, will never seek to the physician.

So it is in our estate of salvation, that because we see not how loathsome we were naturally, we cannot discern the wonderful glory offered. Hence it was that the papists, being filled with their merits, dirges, masses, &c., could not see the preciousness of Christ, and therefore sought not to him.

And we, though we are by God's mercy delivered from the sink of idolatry, yet we do not weigh sufficiently our redemption, because we do not see narrowly into our sins, nor behold the vileness of them; indeed, we confess in general we are sinners, &c., but the cause of our frozenness is for that we do not see the horribleness of our sins.

And, therefore, we are to study, and to look diligently into the glass of God's word, wherein we may see our sins in their proper colours. Indeed, if men be once touched with the sense of sin by the hand of God, then will they cry, Oh the goodness of God! &c., then they will acknowledge it to be the most precious thing that is, to be assured of the favour of God. It followeth,—

Strangers, ver. 21. viz., in regard of the inheritance of God; we have no lot nor portion with Christ before our redemption. Again, without Christ we are strangers from the city of God, from the heavenly Jerusalem, Eph. ii. 12, and we are vagabonds and rogues from the commonwealth of God. Whereas, if we be partakers of Christ, we are of the city of God, of the heavenly city, which came down from above.

And if to be a burgess and free citizen be such an excellent thing, as in the world it is accounted highly,—for we see, whenas Paul said he was a citizen of Rome, Lysias said, 'I bought it with a great prie,' Acts xxii. 28, and, saith he, dare you beat a citizen?—but how much more excellent and precious a thing is it to be a freeman in the heavenly city of God!

Now, if we be citizens of God's city, then followeth another point, that we must be strangers from the world. And, therefore, if we be not strangers from the world, from drunkenness, from our pleasures, from our riches, &c., we are strangers from God. It followeth,—

Enemies; not only strangers, but enemies. For howsoever with men they may be strangers due to another, but yet may be in league together, but with God it is not so; for if we be strangers, we are enemies to God, which is a fearful thing, for if God be our enemy, what can all friends do us good? And if the anger of a king be death, Prov. xvi. 14, then what is the anger of the King of kings?

The anger of God we may see in Job, who, howsoever he was the child of God, yet in his own feeling he thought God to be his enemy, Job vii. 20, xvi. 9. And, therefore, feeling the anger of God, he could not rest; when it was morning, he desired it were evening, &c. And David, Ps. xxxviii. 2, 3, saith, the Lord had shot his arrows at him, and that nothing was found in him by reason of God's anger.

Quest. How can we be said to have been God's

enemies, seeing he always loved us from the beginning of the world? And, therefore, whether is this enmity to be considered actively or passively, in regard of God or of ourselves?

Ans. True it is God loved us from the beginning of the world, but that was in regard of Christ, Eph. i. 4; in regard of ourselves he hated us, we were his enemies; and had it not been for the love in Christ, Eph. ii. 1, 3, 12, we should not have abidden in his presence, but had been consumed; and, therefore, we have to praise God, that in love he spared us so long, till he called us, and sent means of calling us. It followeth,—

Mind. We were enemies therein, which is the principal part of the soul, and, therefore, we were much more enemies in the inferior faculties, in our gross affections, of fear, anger, and in regard of love, and also of our body.

Doct. We learn, that seeing we are thus enemies, there is nothing in us but corruption and enmities in our thoughts, words, and deeds; which is contrary to the papists, which will make us that we can merit at the hand of God by our good works. But if the tree be corrupt, what shall the fruit be? For the reconciliation by Christ, we have heard of it before, ver. 22. The end of our reconciliation is in the next words expressed; which is sanctification, which is the end why we are redeemed, Luke i. 74, 75. This the apostle setteth out by the three words.

The first word signifieth that which is 'not earthly,'* viz., that our minds should be carried from earthly things to heavenly. The second is 'without spot,' viz., not a man that is not charged with blame, but which being blamed, is not truly nor justly blamed.

The third word signifieth a man that cannot be justly brought into judgment before the magistrate, or before the church, signifying that a man, not only may be free from great crime, but even from all that may be reprehended by other inferior men. And here is meant not only to walk unblameable before men, but even before God, to walk uprightly and sincerely. So that sanctification is the end of our redemption, that the gospel should not be evil spoken of.

Doct. Here is confuted justification by good works. For seeing good works are the end and the effects of our salvation, and come after our redemption, they cannot then be the causes of the same; and as the fruit cometh after the trees, so do good works after, from righteousness, which is as the tree that beareth them.

* *Hagios*, holy, not earthly, of α and γῆ.

SERMON XI.

If ye continue grounded and established in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, whereof ye have heard, and which hath been preached to every creature, which is under heaven ; whereof I Paul am a minister : now rejoice I in my sufferings for you, and fulfil the rest of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church ; whereof I am a minister, according to the dispensation of God : which is given unto me you-ward, to fulfil the word of God ; which is the mystery hid since the world began, and from all ages, but now is made manifest to his saints : to whom God would make known what is the riches of his glorious mystery among the Gentiles ; which riches is Christ in you, the hope of glory : whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus , whereunto I also labour and strive according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.—COL. I. 23-29.

THE apostle having set forth the redemption brought unto us by our Saviour, and having shewed that the Colossians had a part in that redemption, he cometh to set forth unto us a condition, whereupon this grace and mercy of God is bestowed upon them, viz. no other but this, ‘If ye continue grounded and settled in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, ye have heard of,’ &c.

The sense hath been before metaphorically set down.

The sum contains an earnest exhortation and effectual unto constancy, and abiding in the truth they have received.

First, Consider the exhortation which Saint Paul giveth to the Colossians, and in them to all the children of God, to abide in the true faith.

Secondly, The reason and grounds whereon this exhortation is laid, many sundry and strong.

First, For the exhortation to continue in the truth, to which men are persuaded by many reasons, for otherwise they have no part in Christ, no part in the reconciliation or sanctification by Christ, for this is necessary to all the children of God, to continue unto the end ; therefore, Mat. xxiv., our Saviour, speaking of the great troubles which should come, saith, ver. 13, ‘he that continueth to the end shall be saved.’ We see example of those that, having professed, go back, leave their hope and the comforts of God’s children. Lot’s wife, Gen. xix. 26, though she went not back, but desired to go to Sodom, in regard of wealth, and riches, and therefore our Saviour saith, Luke xvii. 32, ‘Remember Lot’s wife.’

Thus we see the children of Israel, in Exodus, that though they went out of Egypt with joy and gladness, yet feeling after want of meat in the wilderness, wished to return unto Egypt, Exod. xvi. 3 ; and therefore it is said, Heb. iii. 17, 18, that they should not enter into the Lord’s rest, viz. the spiritual Canaan. Let us beware, therefore, of apostasy, and that we run not in vain. For it were better we had never professed at all, than having once professed the truth, afterward to fall away, and to return like a dog to his vomit, 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

It is a great matter to enter into the profession of Christ ; and if we do not continue, but depart from

it, it had been better we had never known nor professed it. Therefore we read in the Acts, that Barnabas admonished the brethren of Antioch, to continuo in the grace of God, Acts. xiii. 43.

One notable degree of continuance is to have a purpose to continue, and therefore those that have not this purpose to abide in the truth, come life, come death, but rather purpose, if an other time should come, they are ready for that as for this; they are nothing but hypocrites, and have a witness in their own heart of their condemnation. And we must not only have a purpose, but we must labour to be strong, and use all means for the confirming of us, calling on the name of God for it. For Peter had a purpose indeed not to deny Christ, but to stand for him ; but yet he denied him grossly, because he did not call earnestly unto the Lord for strength, neither did use the means of abstaining himself from danger before he was called, but would needs run into danger to the high priest’s house, and lean too much upon himself. Again, we learn that they that are once truly reconciled and called shall abide for ever ; for the apostle saith, ‘they are reconciled, if they continue and abide ;’ and therefore if they abide not they are not truly reconciled and sanctified ; so that this is a true doctrine, a saint once, a saint ever, and that if God once love us, he will never forsake us. As Rom. viii. 39, ‘Neither life, nor death, &c., shall separate us from the love of God in Christ.’ And here it is that our Saviour prayeth for all, John xvii. 20, not only for Peter, but for all that shall believe by the doctrine of his apostles unto the world’s end, even for all the faithful ; and he was heard in his prayer, and therefore it is impossible that they which believe should perish : Mat. xxiv., ‘They shall seduce if it were possible, the elect,’ so that it is impossible for the elect to perish ; and those only are elected which believe, therefore it is said, Acts xiii. 48, that ‘those believed that were chosen to life.’ And therefore we see that the inheritance which God hath given unto us by his Son, we cannot be dis-herited of. Christ’s sheep shall not perish, John x. 28 ; none shall pull them out of his hands, nor deprive them of that life, which in him is laid up for them.

Obj. If those that believe cannot fall away, but must necessarily be saved, what then needs these manifold exhortations and reasons? It is in vain for the preachers to enforce them so much, and for us to come to hear. This is objected of the papists, who would have us stand in doubt of our election; and their reason is this, because the apostle stands upon this so much, because men may fall away.

Ans. But these have a good agreement; for God, which hath ordained we should not perish, hath ordained us these means of his ministers, whereby we should not perish. We know out of the Scripture that every man's time is set of God, John vii. 1, which he shall not pass, as the prophet in the psalm, 'My days are in thine hand, O Lord;' and because God hath appointed me my days, is it a reasonable speech that therefore I should not use means to prolong my life to that time, by food, apparel, &c.? Is this reason?

Again, Gen. ix., God hath promised after drowning of the world, that the world should never be drowned, and that there should be harvest to the world's end; should not men therefore sow and reap their corn? It is a foolish thing to deny it.

When Paul was in danger, Acts xxvii., the Lord told him that not a man should be lost; it was most true, and the Lord having promised, would perform; yet after, when the mariners would have gone away, saith the apostle, unless these stay we shall not be safe.

So that as the Lord hath promised, so he hath provided that the things should be effected by means.

For the setting forth of this he useth two similitudes, one drawn from a ground or foundation, that as in Matthew the house founded on the rock cannot be overthrown, Mat. vii. 24, so they that are grounded on Christ by faith, Mat. xvi. 18, the very gates of hell shall not prevail against them. The second similitude is in the word *settled*, taken from the sitting of the body, which, when it is set, is more firm and steady. By which two similitudes he sheweth what manner of faith we should have.

For the further proof of this, he useth another reason, viz., if ye be not removed from the hope of those things you are in expectation of. So that two things are required: one, that we be not removed from faith, nor leave our faith; secondly, that we be not re-

moved from hope, nor leave our hope. The difference between these two graces is this: faith apprehends and lays hold on the grace and mercy of God in Christ, hope layeth hold on the fruit of this grace, which is eternal life; and faith regards the word of the promise, but hope looks to the thing promised. The reason then is, that we should abide in the truth, because we look and hope for everlasting life, the blessedness laid up for the children of God.

If there were no other reason but to abide on the commandment of God, who commands us to walk in obedience, nay, though we should be damned, yet we are to give obedience to the commandments of God. But whenas God useth this reason of alluring us by propounding everlasting life to us, that ought much more to encourage us hereunto. Men are naturally bent to desire honour, riches, &c. The Lord here propoundeth to us the greatest happiness that can be, even in the kingdom of heaven.

Every man, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 24, runs the race, yet but a few shall have the prize. But seeing there are so many rewards in the kingdom of heaven for all that attain to the end, what a blockishness is it in us, that are so dull and dead to run this race of Christianity?

Again, in these races they run for perishable things, and they will for a time abstain from things that are pleasant, and content themselves with a hard diet, to the end they may run better and be more light; and shall not we therefore abstain from and abridge ourselves of the pleasures and profits of this life, for the gaining of an incorruptible crown in the kingdom of heaven?

And therefore if we could rightly consider that when that I leave my pleasures here, and mine honour and wealth, &c., if I gain everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven, what loss have I thereby? And on the other side, if in this life I seek my pleasure and delight, my credit, wealth, honour, worldly preferment, &c., and take no care nor pains for the life to come, to be partaker of the kingdom of God, what a wretched and miserable case am I in! This would make us more to labour for that which perisheth not, and to contemn these worldly things in comparison of the heavenly, and this life in comparison of that in the world to come.

SERMON XII.

If ye continue, &c.—Col. I. 23–26.

WE have entered into a certain purpose, the apostle hath to confirm the Colossians in the knowledge and profession of the truth received, shewing that there was no true grace unless a continuance in that they had received.

And the drift or end of the apostle is to strengthen

the Colossians, and in them all Christians, in the continuance in their profession. Reasons we have heard before; other follow, as, namely, that the gospel, which they received by him, was the gospel of Christ, and therefore they should continue.

And this gospel he proveth to be the true gospel,

because it was preached by his ministry, and of the other apostles, which is confirmed by that of the prophet, Isa. ii.,* that 'the sound of them went through all the world.'

And seeing this doctrine was preached and received through all the world, therefore it was the true doctrine of God, for no doctrine but this had ever, or shall have, this spreading. No, not the wretched doctrine of the Arians, which were only in the East countries; nor the doctrine of popery, which never went over the whole world, for it was not received in the most parts of the world; no, not of the Grecians, which are near, yet stood always at spear's point with it, and therefore it cannot be the true doctrine.

And the excellency of the gospel of Christ is argued to be a wonderful and marvellous doctrine, as being preached by poor silly fishermen, and that without any other sword but of the word, and of the censure and discipline administered.

Again, this sheweth the wonderfulness of this doctrine, which is able to pierce and sting the hearts of men, and to subdue the hearts, which is more than all the emperors of the world could do; and therefore must needs be the true word of God, which must so break into the hearts of men.

It is no marvel though the doctrine of popery was so received, because it was a doctrine of licentiousness of living, so many feasts and holidays, so many indulgences for any wickedness soever they would commit; besides, in their service, so many delights, singing, piping, ringing for the ears, gorgeous shows for the sight, and every sense hath his play-fellow, and therefore it fitted the humours of men notably, and, therefore, no marvel though many follow it. But the doctrine of the gospel doth clean contrary, it reproveth the evil corruption of nature and subdueth it; and, therefore, they that have found this effect by the gospel, that it hath subdued our natural affections, and converted our former life to a better, it is a notable argument to us of the truth of this gospel.

Ojh. After the apostle setteth forth his fidelity, diligence, and painfulness in his ministry. But, first, he meeteth with an objection, that this should not be the gospel, nor he a minister of God, because he was in continual affliction; and therefore no true minister of the gospel, that God would suffer him so to be afflicted. And we know it is the malice of men, because, if they see any afflicted and distressed, they think them not to be the children of God. As Job's friends, seeing all his goods taken away, his children and himself so tormented, thought it was impossible he should be an upright man, but rather that he was an hypocrite.

David, also, though a valiant man, a prophet, and a wise man, yet was much shaken and like to have gone back, because he saw the godly so afflicted and in misery, Ps. lxxiii. So here these, seeing the apostle, one of the chief of the apostles, to be so grievously

* Qu. 'Ps. xix.'?—Ed.

persecuted and afflicted, as himself (2 Cor. xi.) doth confess, comparing himself to the other apostles, whom they upbraided him withal, he doth rehearse his labours, travels, persecutions, afflictions, dangers, watchings, nakedness, cold, hunger, &c. And in the recital of all these his troubles, he was now in bonds in prison, and therefore they might think he was no true minister of God, nor beloved, that God would suffer him thus to be dealt withal.

Sol. But the apostle answers, that he hath great cause of rejoicing by his afflictions, and addeth two reasons:—One, he maketh supply of the afflictions of Christ, that which was wanting in Christ, he doth fulfil; secondly, it is for the church's good, that he doth it for the body of Christ, which is his church. For the first, here arise strong arguments of the papists for their doctrine of justification by works. And one is, they say that St Paul supplied the passions of Christ, and therefore his passions are not sufficient, but must be pieced and patched with good works; secondly, they say, the apostle suffered for the church, and therefore the martyrdom or merits of martyrs are to be given to saints for their good.

For the answer of these, we are to know that the members of Christ, being joined with Christ, make but one Christ, they being divers members of one body, which is Christ the head, 1 Cor. xii. And as the wife taketh the name of the husband, so do we of Christ, being Christians. Now, then, as our Saviour, Christ went before in afflictions, so we are to fulfil his afflictions and to follow him, Heb. ii. Christ abased himself that he might make himself like us in suffering, and therefore we must be like unto him in sufferings. So that we see what an argument they make, that, because we must be like him in afflictions, therefore our afflictions must merit; nothing less! Another reason in that he saith, 'that which wanted in his afflictions is supplied.' It is meant in regard of his feeling and suffering with them, in their afflictions he suffereth, as before in his own body, so now in the person of his church, and therefore saith to Paul, Acts ix., 'Saul, why persecutest thou me?'

Ojh. The other reason they use, is in that he saith, he suffered for the church.

Sol. We are to understand, indeed, that the ministers of God, and the children of God, when they suffer, suffer for the church, not for the redemption, but for the confirmation, comfort, and example of the church, as the apostle sheweth, 2 Cor. i. 6, 'If we be afflicted it is for your consolation,' &c. As if he had said, I suffer for your cause, that ye, seeing my afflictions and patience in my trouble, might take example to follow me, and, seeing my constancy through God that doth sustain me, ye might receive comfort and example in continuing constant yourselves, and might wade through the afflictions that come unto you. And therefore we see what is the cause why the children of God suffer, viz., for the church's sake, by standing constantly in

the defence of the truth, which Satan especially aimeth at, to make them depart from it, and his instruments also not so much look for their life, as the defaming of the truth; and, therefore, we continuing constant in the truth, we are conquerors, how hardly soever we be dealt withal. And therefore we see what slender grounds they have of the doctrine of merits and indulgences which they give, attributing salvation to merits of saints and martyrs. Where they also deal most wretchedly and blasphemously against the God of heaven, and the Son of God, which speak against the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us, and yet give that honour to saints, in that they will have their righteousness imputed unto others.

Doct. 1. This we are taught, that if we will indeed reign with Christ, we must be content to suffer with Christ, be content to undergo persecutions, frowns, and scornings of our friends and others, we must take part with Christ in his afflictions. He that would wear Christ's crown, must bear Christ's cross.

Doct. 2. Another thing; that we are here to take comfort in our afflictions, in that Christ seeth their afflictions, and is as tenderly affected as if he himself were in trouble, in prison, fire, &c.

And therefore in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ii. 17, 18, the apostle saith, he himself was afflicted, as that we might be redeemed, so also that he might have experience of our troubles, that so he might the more tender us in our afflictions. As the woman that hath felt the pains of child-birth can tell best what it is, so Christ himself knoweth our troubles, who hath had the sense of troubles in himself.

The apostle after calleth himself, ver. 25, the minister of the church, as before of the gospel; both are one. He means that he was God's minister for the edification and comfort of his church. The end of his ministry of the church is to 'fulfil the word of God,' by calling those that are to be called to the knowledge of the truth, wherein the word is fulfilled, or else fulfilled in hardening the heart of those that are not to be saved; for to them the ministry of the word is to further judgment to them that condemn it, and profit not by it. In the next words, he sets down the dignities of God's word, ver. 25: 1, it is a 'mystery,' a secret; secondly, a mystery 'hid from all ages'; thirdly, 'revealed' only to the faithful, or 'saints.' A mystery: a word taken from the heathen from their superstitious usage in their devilish religion, especially among the Egyptians, their religion being called a mystery, and their ministry mystical, or mystical men, their religion being hid to the priests alone, who, by pictures of birds and beasts, had all their religion expressed, that others might not know it. And therefore we see how fitly this superstition of the Gentiles may agree with the doctrine of popery, which will have the word hidden from the lay people, as they call them. Whereas God would have his will delivered unto his servants and people.

The commendation of the gospel, then, is set forth by this word mystery, in that it is such an excellent thing as that it cannot be attained unto by any wit of men and angels. And therefore the angels are said, 1 Pet. i. 12, to stoop to look into this marvellous work of salvation, by the doctrine of salvation.

Men usually of fine wits will be looking into things that are hard, and dark, and high, and therefore Solomon saith, 'Hearken, my son, and I will tell thee dark parables.' And, in another place, I will teach thee things of high account, wherein the wisest head may be occupied. So that we see the excellency of the gospel.

Again, this is a mystery 'hid from the beginning,' so many thousand years.

Obj. But this may seem to confirm an error in popery, that this being hid from so many generations, was hid from Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs, and therefore they could not be saved. But if we be the children of Abraham, and must rest in his bosom, then he was saved.

Ans. But, for answer, it is to be meant that the promise of this mystery was given to Abraham, but it came not till now, and therefore in regard of that it was hidden. And again, though it was known, yet it was but darkly known, in clouds and figures, and therefore they could not see it so plainly as we do. For the fathers did not see the sufferings of Christ as we do, and therefore, in that regard, it was hidden.

And this the apostle to the Ephesians sheweth, when he saith, chap. iii. 5, this mystery 'was not opened in other ages unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostle and prophets,' &c. As we go before them in knowledge, so also in obedience, else it is to our greater condemnation.

Revealed to his saints, viz., to those only that are the children of God, not to all men, and therefore it is that Christ, Mat. xi. 25, praiseth his Father for hiding this from the world, yea, from the wisest of the world, and for opening the same to babes; and he hath chosen the foolish, saith St Paul, to confound the wise, 1 Cor. i. 27.

Obj. But the wicked know the gospel, the truth of it, which is by the working of God's Spirit only, and believe it, and can defend and dispute of it, and yet have no part in it. How then? is it not revealed to them?

Ans. That understanding is no true understanding, because it is not joined with an alternation, in that the gospel hath not converted them to it; they do (it may be) know the gospel, but they do not obey it, they do not rest in the shadow of it, the gospel cannot persuade them to submit themselves to the kingdom of Christ, and to obey his laws. The virtue, therefore, and efficacy of this mystery is hidden to them, and not imparted.

SERMON XIII.

To whom God, &c.—COL. I. 27-29.

WE have heard how the apostle commended the gospel unto all men by most notable titles given unto it, as, first, that it was a mystery and secret ; secondly, hid since the world began, and from all ages ; thirdly, that this mystery was given only to his saints, and not to the rest of the world, specially in respect of the virtue that doth attend upon it.

Further, it followeth to shew other points why this gospel of Christ should be amiable unto us, viz., that as this mystery cometh from God to his saints, so it proceedeth from his own will, in that he saith, ‘to whom God would.’ For whereas it may be asked why God hath made this difference between men, seeing all naturally are in the same case and state of guilt, the answer is, that it is the Lord’s own will, his good pleasure and good will.

Where we are to consider, that in ourselves there is nothing that can merit this. For nothing but nought can come from the fountain (or puddle rather), of our pollution and corruption.

Again, it is not the foreseeing off the good works which God saw we should do ; for it is false, that many wretched men and enemies to the free salvation of God (even such as make some profession), say, that it was the good works God foresaw in Jacob which made God to choose him, and evil works in Esau to reject him.

But here the apostle cutteth of all that, that it is the will of God that doth it ; and whatsoever he willeth is just and righteous, which men cannot do ; and therefore it is a wretched thing, that men will call the will of God to the bar of their own will-wits, and reason. ‘Thou hast hid,’ saith our Saviour, Mat. xi. 25, 26, ‘these things from the wise ; and it is so, because it was thy good pleasure.’

The pot doth not reason with the potter, why he made one to stand under the bed, another for a better use ; and yet vile and wretched men will reason with God why he doth this. But we are to learn to rest contented with the will of God, for that is a marvellous sauciness in men ; for will not a master count it a great malapertness if his servant rise up and control him ? and is it not much more vile malapertness and sauciness to rise against God ?

Use. And this is a notable argument to stir us up to thankfulness and obedience unto God, seeing it is only the good will, mercy, and favour of God. It serves to stir us up to thankfulness unto God, more notably than if he did it through foreseeing our good works ; as the servant which hath received benefits from his master of good will, it will make him more thankful and bound to his master.

Moreover, the gospel is commended from the sub-

ject and matter ; for as the trades and arts that have more excellent matter are more esteemed, as goldsmiths, printers, and those that sell silk ; and sciences also are commended in regard of the excellency of the matter, as law more excellent than others, and after physic ; so the gospel is more singularly commended by the matter, which is Christ, to whom God hath revealed his will ; and therefore the apostle would know nothing among the Corinthians, but Christ and him crucified ; and Christ is the riches, glory, and mystery of his Father. Now, seeing all these things men affect, and they are all in Christ, and are offered in the gospel, what a madness is it that men so little regard it !

Men desire to be rich. Now our Saviour Christ hath all the riches of his Father, and he hath all honour and glory in his Father, and hath the secrets of his Father, being in his bosom ; yea, such secrets, that the angels stoop to look into. And albeit these be not transitory riches and honour, but endure for ever, yet we seek not after them.

Thirdly, Christ is commended to be the hope of glory : i. e. he by whom we look for glory and blessedness for evermore ; which self-same words the apostle useth, that he is ‘the apostle of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ our hope,’ 1 Tim. i. 1.

Doct. All that are true Christians are persuaded of the love of God towards us in Christ, and do by hope expect and look for the enjoying and fruition of that favour, which is eternal life. And therefore it standeth with us to examine ourselves, whether we have this hope and expectation, whether we long and desire after it, and breathe after it, as the hart after the waters, being smitten, so whether we do breathe and long for everlasting life. Let us examine whether, if we might enjoy all the comforts of the world, and pleasures of this life, up to the knees, whether we would desire to live and continue in them. Then be we sure that we have not the hope of everlasting life, and those heavenly joys ; and then be we sure we never believed aright. For it is a token that if we be thus nailed to the earth, we have not felt how good Christ is ; for if we did, we would contemn all these things to enjoy him and live with him.

In the two last verses, 28, 29, is commended the excellency of his ministry ; for if the Colossians have a sufficient minister, then they should continue in the love and obedience of the gospel. For men, if they find a hole in the minister’s coat, they think it is a good cause to leave the gospel ; and therefore to remove that objection, the apostle urgeth the sufficiency of his own ministry.

Here two points in our apostle’s ministry are to be

considered : 1, his faithfulness ; 2, his care, diligence, and painfulness. For his faithfulness, it is noted in that he is said to admonish all ; where we are to note that the calling of the apostle was an extraordinary calling, whereby he had the field of the whole world to till. But the ministers now-a-days have only a plough-land in one congregation to till, and therefore that calling ceased. Again, herein is the faithfulness of the apostle, that as all were committed to him, so he cared for all ; so is the duty of every good minister, that every one that is committed to his charge, young or old, of what state or condition soever, is to be regarded by him.

Furthermore, it is again to be noted, that he did teach and admonish them, whereby is meant all those means of setting an edge of the gospel, that it might pierce and go through, as admonishing and rebuking the foward, exhorting of all sorts, the good by persuasion. In the doctrine, reproof, reprehension, all these are contained in the word admonition ; and the word signifieth as much, as a laying of anything to the heart, which is done by all those means. So that we see how necessary it is to have the word preached and applied, and therefore far be it to be content with bare reading. For it is not enough that there be knowledge to enlighten the understanding, but that the affections be moved, and the conscience be wrought, that men may be withdrawn from evil, and stirred up to good. And therefore those that are reproved, are to yield obedience unto the reproof and reprehension. And the apostle further shews that he doth both teach and admonish 'in all wisdom.'

This is necessary in every minister, for as the steward is not only to lay out that they receive for the family, but to give every one according to their state, sick or whole, so in the ministers.

This wisdom is to be considered in the persons ; and in the things belonging to the persons.

In the persons, to be considered whether they have knowledge, that they be gently taught. If they have knowledge and yet no conscience, they must use sharp reprehension, laying the judgments of God to wake their sleepy conscience. If there be both, then use partly threats, partly gentle dealing.

If any be cast down, then to give them comfortable exhortations, laying the mercies of God before them.

For if men be secure, having knowledge, then to lay the promises of God before them, would harden them more, so contrariwise in despairing.

Further, it is to be considered whether they be children or men ; and then they must, if they be babes, have milk ; if strong, they must have stronger meat. Further, in regard of the sins of the persons, consider whether public or private, if private at least to a few, if it be publicly reproved, it is a want of wisdom ; if public, then publicly, not privately to be reproved.

Again, consider whether the sin be of infirmity or

of malicionsness, if of malice and contempt, it must be more sharply pricked through.

Thus of the faithfulness of the minister to preach Christ, both by the doctrine, and also by the admonition, to give a point to it, that the doctrine may enter through.

We have also heard of the wisdom of the apostle. The end of all this teaching and admonishing is, 'to make men perfect,' allnding to the sacrifices of the priest in the law. For though the minister be no sacrificer, as the wretched papists do make of them, yet there is a resemblance in the ministers to the law, that by the word of God the people are, as it were, killed and cut, to be a fit sacrifice unto God ; and therefore all this care and wisdom is to be used, that they may be acceptable to God.

Doct. Here the ministers are to learn a good lesson, that they are not to content themselves with a beginning, that the people be entered only, nor the people content themselves with beginning, that they think it enough that they are altered in judgment, &c., but they must still labour to grow and increase to perfection, as we pray in the Lord's prayer to do the will of God like the angels, in all readiness and willingness. And we must grow, and not be dwarfs in Christianity, but still to grow ; for in Christianity there is no old age, but in the oldest age is a growth, till such time as all rebellion and imperfection be taken away in the kingdom of God.

Lastly, is set down his diligence, ver. 29, wherein he laboured, signifying a labour with weariness, till he had spent his strength ; as Isaiah saith of our Saviour Christ, that he spent his strength in his ministry.

Doct. And further, the apostle contents not himself with that, but saith he striveth. This is the duty of a good minister, to labour continually, and therefore he is compared to a husbandman, that winter and summer never ceaseth ; and this labour must be with pains, and therefore compared they are to harvestmen, that labour in the heat of the sun.

Another similitude he useth, that he striveth, taken from lawyers and counsellors at the bar, and from soldiers with their enemies. Where he noteth the duty of the minister, not only to labour in doctrine and admonition, but also to set himself against any thing that may let and hinder the gospel. And therefore it condemneth those, that content themselves with delivering the word ; for that is not enough, but they must labour to prevent, by all striving, that which may arise and hinder the doctrine delivered.

Last of all, he sheweth that the Lord blessed his labour in the ministry, and prospered him, which, howsoever the ministers cannot always look for so full a blessing, yet the ministers have this to look unto, and whereof they may be sure, that they bring the sweet savour of Christ unto God, whether in the salvation or in the condemnation of them that hear them.

The duties, then, of the minister are, first, to preach Christ; secondly, to do it with faithfulness, wisdom, and diligence; thirdly, to strive, and struggle, using

all endeavour to advance the kingdom of their Master, and to hinder the proceedings of the devil against it.

SERMON XIV.

For I would ye knew what great fighting I have for your sakes, and for them of Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my person in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, and they knit together in love, and in all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to know the mystery of God, even the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and your stedfast faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him; rooted and built in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.—COL. II. 1-7.

WE have heard in the former chapter how the apostle hath delivered a short sum of the holy doctrine of the gospel, recommending the same by sundry arguments, some drawn from the excellency of the doctrine and from the matter of it, Christ, and from his own ministry, faithfulness, and diligence.

Now he entereth into another doctrine; for, having set forth the excellency of the doctrine, he now setteth forth the remedies of certain errors which might have overturned them from the doctrine.

And first in these verses, as before he had made a preparation, so now he maketh another preparation for the convincing and reproofing of those errors that were risen up among [them]. For we know how we are cleaved unto our errors and corruptions, and how hardly removed from them; and therefore the apostle doth here by this preface lance, as it were, their hearts, by shewing them his exceeding care and love towards them.

As if he should say, That which I said of my grievous labour and strife for all men is truly verified of you; for I would not have you ignorant of the great agony and strife that I have for you, and for those that are in the church of Laodicea, and others about you in the country of Phrygia, notwithstanding that they never did see my person, ver. 1.

And my care and thought is, that, through the preaching of the gospel, you might be comforted at the very heart by a knitting, setting together, and compacting of your minds through love one to another, and through all abundance of persuaded understanding and acknowledgment of the mystery of God; that is to say, of the Father and of Christ, ver. 2.

In which Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge treasured up, but yet hidden from the natural man, ver. 3.

The drift of all which commendation of the preaching of the gospel and of Christ, whom the gospel doth preach and set forth unto you is, that no man by apparent and persuasible speeches do transport you, ver. 4.

Where, if you ask how I, that never saw you, should

be thus careful of you, and should care for you so much, that never came to see you, know that although I be absent as touching the flesh, yet I am present with you as touching the spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and policy of the church, caused from the soundness of faith which is towards Christ, ver. 5.

Wherefore, as you have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so let it appear by your conversation, as in all other things, so in holding fast the truth of the gospel, ver. 6.

Being rooted and builded upon in him, and strengthened in the faith, according as you have been taught of Epaphras; abounding in the same faith, and that with thanksgiving, for the mercy you have received in Christ, ver. 7. This is the sense.

The parts are, a particular declaration of his care for the Colossians, together with an exhortation to care for themselves, that they be not carried away with any wind of false doctrine, contrary to that he hath declared, and which they had learned of Epaphras.

The sum whereof is, a preparation of the hearts and minds of the Colossians to receive the rebuke and reprehension touching the error and corruption among them.

First, here is a declaration of the apostle's great care towards the Colossians, and others of their neighbours' countries, Phrygia and Laodicea.

Secondly, an exhortation that they should have care of themselves. For the first, here is an application of all, that he had spoken before generally, that he took them to witness that the care and love which he had was to them-ward.

Doct. So that it is necessary that the minister should have the love of the people, and make known unto them his loving affection, before his reproof can settle in their hearts: it is necessary that the persuasion that he doth it in love be entered into them.

Of the great strife and agony. A similitude taken from the custom of the country, where at certain times there was a great meeting to wrestle and run for mastery; so that as they which did venture this strife use all their strength and might to get the mastery, and

so likewise in dangerous fight, which they had even to blood. Hereby he sheweth the exceeding pains and great care he had for them; and therefore the apostle, besides the outward thing of banishment, scourgings, shipwrecks, &c., had also a great troop of enemies within; viz., his exceeding cares which he took, that troubled him exceedingly. His care appeared not only in earnest prayer continually, but in writing, exhorting, and persuading them to continue and go forward, &c. And these cares he compares to an army or troop of enemies which met with him, and contended with him, such was his care. And no doubt, that seeing his charge was through the whole world, it must be great. For as the church is said to travail in bringing forth children, Rev. xii. 2, so the apostle, travailing of so many, even through the whole world, it being committed unto him, must needs have great care and pain.

Here we see the exceeding love of the apostle, that seeing he was absent, and had never seen them, nor they him, yet his care was so great, he commendeth his exceeding love. For the sight of misery doth greatly increase the affection and care, the eye and the ear being the doors by which pity enters in. The cause wherefore he cared was, that they might be comforted in spirit. Now, insomuch as his care and love appeared by his writing, which consisted of the gospel, it sheweth that there is nothing in the world that ministereth sound comfort but the gospel. For as for pleasures, wealth, good cheer, &c., they bring no sound comfort, but are like to a flame that is soon out, or smoke in the top of the chimney that soon vanisheth away, or like the fat of lambs, that, when a little heat of affliction cometh, melteth. But the comfort by the gospel standeth by one in all affliction; yea, in death itself: it is a continual feast. And therefore, in Mat. xxii. 2, the kingdom of heaven is compared to a feast, yea, to a king's feast at the marriage of his son, where no delicate fare can be wanting, but by his commandment will be brought. So St John saith, 1 John i. 4, 'This we write, that your joy may be full.' In the Acts we read, chap. ii. 46, that those that were called, though they were hated of all, yet met together, and participated in eating of meat, and did eat their common meat with great joy. This is usual in the Acts, that where the gospel came was great joy and comfort; and therefore when Philip came to Samaria, Acts viii., they, receiving the gospel, were comforted. So that that comfort which is in sin, as adultery, &c., is wretched, and the beginning of sorrow, and that which is in lawful outward things is but momentary; but this peace which Christ giveth is constant. 'My peace,' saith he, 'shall never be taken away.'

The first cause of this comfort that we receive by the gospel is the knowledge of the truth of the gospel, as hath been delivered in the chapter before; for it is a notable comfort when a man knows which is the

word of God, and what God hath commanded; it is a comfort to do it when he knoweth it is commanded by God; and contrariwise, it is a comfort when it is known what is forbidden.

Whereas, on the contrary, to the children of God it is a great anguish to be ignorant what to do in God's service, and what course to take which might be pleasing unto God.

Secondly, not only knowledge, but persuasion, which next followeth, to know that the promises shall come to pass, and the threatenings shall be performed, to be assured of it.

Thirdly, but especially acknowledgment is matter of most singular comfort, when he not only knoweth and is persuaded, but applieth it to himself. This is notable comfort: for what profit is it to a man to know this is good for him, and hath it not; to be in a dungeon, and to know the sun shineth, and yet to have no light; and to be an hungry, and to know there is meat and bread, and yet to have no part? This is rather matter of greater grief.

Another cause of comfort is love, which is compared to the jointures of the artificers, that when they build any house, by the joints they set all the parts together; or rather to the joints of the body, whereby every part being joined, are in peace; whereas if one be out of joint, it is a pain to all. So is the joining of Christians by a true loving affection one towards another. Ver. 3, 'In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid.' Having commended the gospel, because it brings wonderful comfort by wisdom and knowledge, now he sheweth where they are to be had, viz., in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of his Father, viz., touching his manhood, whereof here it is spoken, which is for us, who from his manhood receive the graces of God, flowing and running from the head to the edges of the garment. And in his manhood are all the graces of God, though not infinitely, yet so far as the manhood can comprehend, perfectly laid up in Christ. For he hath all the graces we have need of, and therefore the gospel hath all; so as here is a converse reason, for Christ hath all, therefore the gospel hath all; and contrary, the gospel hath all the graces of God necessary for us, therefore Christ hath all; for whatsoever the gospel hath Christ hath, and we receive from him by the gospel.

This confuteth the papists, who will have us to have anything from canons, decrees of popes, &c. But the apostle saith that the gospel hath all wisdom and understanding, because it hath them from Christ.

Hid. Which sheweth that these graces of God are hid from all creatures, yea, from the angels themselves, and therefore they labour and bend, even with pain, if it were possible, stooping to see into these mysteries.

This secret and hid wisdom of God we see in this: for, 1, it seemeth a strange thing that all men should fall, and become the members of Satan, and yet that

out of Satan's hands he would take his children ; this was a strange thing, and a wonderful mystery and wisdom, to shew his love to them the more. 2. It is a strange and a hid thing that God should give his Son to die ; yet it is a singular mystery, to show the hatred of sin, and love of his children, that he abased his Son for their sake. 3. Again, it is a strange thing that God should suffer his children to be afflicted in this life, and the wicked to have ease and peace, and the godly to go to heaven by hell, to honour by dishonour, &c. But it was that they might know their own infirmities, and also the better have a feel-

ing of the comforts, that it might be the sweeter. 4. Again, a great mystery that the Lord, to the building of the excellent work of the church, should choose such weak instruments and such poor means as fishermen, &c. But it is that in their weakness his power might be manifest. 5. Again, it is a strange mystery in the manner of the delivery of the gospel, not in eloquence of men, but in a plain style, that as well the maid at the mill as the prince in the throne might understand it. But it was that none might impute it to the excellency of the tongue.

SERMON XV.

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.—COL. II. 3, 4.

WE have heard how the apostle bath entered into the commendation of the gospel, by many properties and effects in it. And last, we heard that it is matter of singular comfort unto the people of God ; and also, that it is a mystery hid in all ages, and in this, but only to the children of God.

There we have handled that it is a perfect doctrine, leading us the right way whither the Lord calleth us. For in the gospel of our Saviour Christ is laid up unto us all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, being only found in him. And, therefore, the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 2, would be known of nothing amongst God's people, but of Christ and him crucified ; and therefore in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid. And the woman, John iv., saith, the Messias shall tell us all things, which our Saviour Christ confirmeth, saying, 'I am he.' And therefore, John xiv., he professeth that he had taught to his disciples the whole will of God. And, 1 Cor. xi., what the apostles received, they gave all to the people, and therefore all wisdom and knowledge is hid in our Saviour Christ, and revealed to us in the gospel, whereby he is brought unto us. And therefore this is a notable commendation of the gospel, which is able to perfect a man of God, 2 Tim. iii. 17, who is to teach the people the will of God. And if the word of God is able to make perfect a minister, then much more the people, it being needful that he should have more than they. Which he proveth by the effect, that the duty of the minister is to teach the truth, and confute errors, which the word will perfectly minister unto him ; and further, to exhort the good, reprove corruptions, and dehort from that is naught. And therefore, howsoever the papists will not deny that it is a perfect word, yet will they have the canons of councils, and decrees of men. But the perfection of the word appeareth here to have no need of man's inventions.

It is hid, viz., in Christ, who is the bosom of his

Father, and thereforo only can reveal the will of God his Father.

And howsoever a natural man cannot deny the truth of the law, yet not Adam himself in his innocency was able to see the mystery of the gospel, nor the angels themselves, though more excellent, yet could not, without seeing and stooping to behold it, understand this secret mystery.

Here the apostle inserteth an exhortation : 'Therefore take heed that no man deceive you,' with probable and likely speech ; which may seem at the first to have a fair show. For this is a mystery and hid thing, and therefore not seen at the first ; yet oftentimes it comes to pass, that a lie is more probable and likely to be a truth, than the truth itself. Example :

The fruit that groweth now in Sodom hath a more excellent show than other fruit ; and yet, come to feel it, it goeth to froth and wind, and that loathsome. Again, in gold, before it be tried, that which is not gold may have a greater colour and show than the true gold. And therefore men are not to look unto the eloquent words and fine speeches, and that men carry the matter away smoothly, without any regard of the soundness of the matter. For hence it cometh to pass that men are led away into error ; and the danger is not only when false doctrine is delivered, as here it was, but even when false doctrine is not delivered, as among the Corinthians, where they did only with eloquent and brave words mount aloft in their eloquence. And therefore the apostle doubteth not to call them false apostles ; for whenas men respect the words, and have little respect unto the matter, and are led away by every wind of doctrine, there is a sedulement. The apostle then teacheth us, that no man's learning, authority, eloquence, should draw us to believe that is spoken ; for not only eloquence, but authority and honour, doth carry us usually away. But the apostle saith, let no man deceive you ; and therefore, Gal. i., 'Though an angel from heaven,

preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed,' or after any other way; for as the matter which he preached, viz., the cross of Christ, is low and base in appearance, so must the manner of the delivering of it be.

Obj. Whereas the apostle had spoken of his care, strife, and wrestling for them, they might say that he had no such care as he pretends, because he never came to them. This secret objection he answereth, that he is always present with them, which he doth by a distinction of presence, viz. not bodily, but a spiritual presence, which speech is used to the Corinthian, 1 Cor. vi., who, reproving them for that, being bodily present, did suffer the incestuous person, without excommunicating him; and therefore saith, 'I present in spirit, do bid that he should be excommunicated.' This presence is not in regard of the substance of the spirit, for that is in the body, and cannot be in two places, no, not the angels, though nimble and swift, but only God is in all places. And therefore is meant, by the spirit, that he is present with the faculties of his mind, viz., in understanding their estate, and in his affection and will, viz. his love and care.

So that we see the presence of the children of God is other than the presence of other men, even with those they never saw: if they be in good estate, to understand and rejoice, and praise God for it; if they be in distress, to grieve and mourn for them, and to pray for them. Let us then examine ourselves, why we desire to hear for news out of other countries. Is it for this end? We see Nehemiah, Neh. i. 2, 4, being at the king's court, when men came from Jerusalem, by reason of the wicked, which troubled the people, he asked how the church of God did; and understanding the misery of it, fell to fasting. So are we to do, to inquire of the churches of God, to the end that we may rejoice for their good, or be sorrowful for their evil.

Rejoicing, ver. 5. Seeing by the eye of his mind, and considering their good order, he rejoiced. So that the understanding and seeing is in the mind, which must go before rejoicing in the will and affections, which proceedeth from it; so that we see that howsoever the children of God have many causes of sorrow, yet they have more occasions of comfort than the wicked have.

Good order; viz. the good government and disposition of the church, as is the disposition of an army; so that in that they had a good order in the church, it did his heart good. And then, in that it is said to be set and disposed as an army, therein also is further matter of rejoicing. So that here we see in a church is matter of joy, when the government of the Son of God is there, and also when it is practised. So that where the order of our Saviour Christ is not, there can be nothing but confusion and disorder. Moses, Num. i., though a man instructed in the will of God,

would not himself give answer concerning the people's coming to sacrifice, yet would not himself give order unto them.

And we see, because the ark of God was carried in a cart, not by the priests, which the Lord had appointed, the plague began to break on the people.

Again, whenas the ark did shake, and Uzzah being but a Levite, not a priest, did but touch the ark, which none but the priests might do, yet because he brake the Lord's order, is smitten with death.

Here we see what church is a happy church, viz., that which hath the doctrine and word of God, and the sacraments sincerely delivered and administered.

After the apostle having spoken of his own care, he cometh to the care of the Colossians, exhorting them as they had received, so they walk in that they had received. Two things then are necessary, viz. what we receive, viz. not the doctrine of antichrist instead of the doctrine of Christ; not the doctrine of error instead of the truth. And secondly, that having the doctrine of truth, that we walk in it.

Walking being an ordinary speech in the Scriptures, viz. as a wayfaring man, not to sit still, or go backward, but to go forward in that way.

The manner of walking is, first, that they be *rooted*, and secondly, that they be *knit*, viz. that they be constant and stedfast; before, in the former chapter, he said that they should be settled, which cannot be easily moved, and to be grounded.

Here he useth two other excellent similitudes: first, to be rooted, taken from trees, not like to reeds shaken with the wind, but like the cedars, or as in Isaiah, the oaks which cannot be removed. And our estate, if rooted in Christ, is far better than the tree, whereas, if we be not truly grounded in Christ, our condition is worse than the tree; for the tree being cut will spring up again, and being planted to another plant will grow again; but as one of the friends of Job saith, if they be once gone and removed, they never rise again.

But the children of God can never be disiplanted, being set before the beginning of the world in God's election, Eph. i. 4, which is a sure foundation, 2 Tim. ii. 19, never to be raised and confounded.

And he saith, *built*, ver. 7, viz., grounded on Christ, and therefore shall never be separated from him. Whereas, if we be not built on Christ, our cause is more miserable, Ezek. xviii., it must be stedfast by faith in Christ.

So that one quality is, to be grounded and constant; another is that we may abound, viz. not stand at a stay; but it is required that we run over as a vessel filled to the top. So that we ought, not only not be drawn away by every wind of doctrine, but we ought to increase in grace; and therefore our estate is compared to the estate of a man, that is first a child, then a young man, then in the perfect age.

Lastly, is set down thankfulness to God for the

benefits received, and therefore we should not be forgetful of them, but carry them always in remembrance; which thankfulness must appear by our obedience in

walking in the commandments of God, and in the continual practice of our love to God, and to our brethren.

SERMON XVI.

Beware lest there be any man that spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, through the traditions of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.—COL. II. 8-10.

THE apostle bath, in the words before in this chapter, made a way to come to the principal point he purposed. And first he testified his care over them, and moveth them to have care over themselves; and, that they should take heed of being carried away by any probability and likeness of speech, here he particularly layeth it down what he would have them take heed of; as if he should say,

Look about you by a sound knowledge of the truth, lest any of what opinion of learning, or heliness whatsoever, by either show of reason coming from the brain of men, which hath received strength in that it hath been received from hand to hand, and yet is nothing else but a vain deceit and sleight, or else by the ceremonies of the law, wherewith, as by certain rudiments, or A B C, the people of God, as children, were trained to this perfection of doctrine which now hath shined out unto you, do vanquish you, and drive you before them as prisoners fast bound in the chains and manacles of error. Yea, take heed of any doctrine whatsoever that either taketh anything from Christ, or doth place any, the least, jot of salvation otherwhere than in him, ver. 8.

For, seeing that in the human nature of Christ the fulness of the Godhead doth personally so rest and abide, that both the natures of the Godhead and the manhood make but one Christ, what is there needful for your salvation which you may not have abundantly in him? ver. 9.

Considering especially that this fulness of all graces which is in him, he hath not for himself, but for you, which, of his abundance, is ready to fit you with all whatsoever you have need of to salvation; and the same Christ, howsoever sometime a little inferior to angels, as touching the humiliation of his manhood, yet now, even according to his manhood, is head not only of his church, as is aforesaid, but of all powers and principalities which are in heaven, whereby may appear your error, which worship angels, ver. 10.

The sum is an exhortation, which the apostle giveth to the Colossians, to take heed they should not be deceived by any false doctrine, and the reasons, and grounds. The parts are, an exhortation not to be deceived by philosophy, and the beginnings; and the reason, because if they be led away they are made a prey.

Again, they should have nothing [but] in Christ, in
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whom is all fulness; and though he was man, and inferior to the angels, yet now, and as he is God, he is above them all, and head of them all.

See, or take heed. Here the apostle first teacheth that a man must have a sound knowledge and understanding in the truth of God, for he speaketh not of the bodily sight.

Doct. It belongeth to all men and all women, even to all God's children, of what sort and condition soever they be, in spite of the enemies of God's truth, the papists; it is required at their hands, and commanded, that they should know and bear away the word of God.

And they must grow in knowledge, for they are not to stand at a stay; for, as they must grow in zeal, so also must they do in knowledge; for better have no zeal, than zeal without knowledge, which is most dangerous, as a wild horse. And therefore it is that David, though a wise man, yet standeth much on this point, Ps. cxix. part 3.

And if we must proceed in godliness all our life, so also in knowledge. It is necessary that we have knowledge, to the end we may be able to be defended against the subtleties of the false teachers and deceivers of the world, Gal. i., who are compared to enchanters, Jannes and Jambres, which withstood Moses before Pharaoh, 2 Tim. iii. 8; it is necessary that we have knowledge, to the end we be not blinded by them.

He biddeth them take heed of philosophy, which is a glorious name, signifying the love of wisdom. But the apostle doth not take away the use of philosophy; for, if it be well used, it is a good handmaid for to help the ministers, if so be it be not used to make a gloss and a show to the world. But here that philosophy is condemned which repugneth the word and gospel of God, for so far forth as philosophy will, as a handmaid, wait and attend on the word of God, to further the ministers, so long it is commendable, and a good help to further the ministers in the word of God.

But whenas philosophy doth rise up to go hand in hand, or as Hagar to her mistress, to go before, the word of God, then it is to be condemned, and cast out. And the reason that philosophy is to be taken heed of is, by reason that there is deceit in it, as we see in natural philosophy, that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, of nothing nothing is made. This is contrary to the word of God. Again, in moral philosophy, they say

that if there be not free will, why should there be punishment? But this is to be taken heed of; this condemneth them which, to excuse their mingling of the word with philosophy, they say they do but as the children of Israel did, which rob Egypt of her jewels; or be as Moses, who was skilful in all the learning of Egypt, as the schoolmen, papists and others, do. But they do nothing but rob them of their botches and boils. The reason that philosophy doth deceive, is because it cometh from the brains and invention of men.

Another thing the apostle willeth them to take heed of is, of the elements of the world, which were the traditions of God; for, might they say, if you will not have us to deal with the inventions of men, will ye deny that we should use the decrees of God, as the traditions of the law? Here we see whom the apostle had to do withal, viz. such as joied with the gospel the inventions of men and philosophy, and the ceremonies of the law. The same do we deal withal, viz. the papists; for, though they confess Christ, &c., yet, because they join the traditions of men and ceremonies which the gospel will not admit, therefore we are not to join with them, but to oppose them, as the apostle did.

The reason why the apostle sheweth they should not be bound unto the traditions of the law: because the ceremonies of the law are the elements, as it were the A B C, wherein children are to be taught. Now it is no point of a good scholar to be always in the A B C, so we must not always be babes in Christianity, for those were the shadows of that truth which now is, and therefore these are the days of restauration and perfection.

Now then, if we must not have these ceremonies which God hath appointed, but that Christ must be preached simply and barely without ceremonies, much less are we to use the traditions and ceremonies of men, which the papists' religion doth wholly consist of. Indeed, there is a doctrine in the ceremonies of the law which is perpetual, but the ceremonies themselves are at an end.

Persuading them not to be carried away by false doctrine, he sheweth particularly what, viz., philosophy, and the elements, and in sum whatsoever is not according to Christ. Now he rendereth the reasons why they should take heed; first, because they should be made a prey. To whom?

First, To those that deceived them. Secondly, then, to Satan; and therefore they had need to watch, for if a man fear his house shall be robbed, will he not watch? Then much more ought we to take heed and watch, lest we be a prey to these enemies.

For as when the Romans in triumph, having their captives, led them at their chariots' tails, so, if we be deceived, we are led at the tails of those, yea, of the devil himself; and as our Saviour saith, John x., the thief cometh to make a spoil.

Another reason to be wary, because they are not according to Christ.

Doct. Here we may know what an error and false doctrine is: if it take anything from Christ, and do not attribute all sufficiency unto Christ, for Christ is our teacher, priest, and king; if he be our only teacher, then we must have nothing but that which he teacheth us, for he teacheth to his church the whole will of his Father.

And therefore we may know the papists are deceivers, which bring in traditions not according to Christ.

Again, Christ is our priest; and therefore as it was the office of the priest to offer sacrifice, so Christ offered himself a sacrifice for our sins; he that bringeth in any other sacrificer is contrary to Christ.

Another office of the priest is to pray for the people, and therefore they that bring in any other intercessor is contrary to Christ.

Again, it is the office of Christ to be king over his church, to command and give laws, and therefore the doctrine of the pope to be the head of the church, to give laws, to rule, command, &c., is a false doctrine.

The reason why Christ is sufficient is, because the whole Godhead is in our Saviour Christ, yea, the Godhead of our Saviour Christ is really in Christ, and therefore he is only able to furnish us of all; and therefore we need not any points of philosophy, or any ceremonies of the law, to give supply.

Here the apostle dealeth as a good teacher, that there being a controversy between the false prophets and him, they allege one thing, he allegeth another. Now, to confute them, he taketh a third thing wherein both agreed. So he doth also to the Athenians; for if he had alleged the prophets, they would have made a mock of him, and therefore he taketh one of their own poets. This is to be practised of the ministers of the word.

Here, then, the apostle proveth that we are accomplished in Christ, for he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30; and therefore he is our whole accomplishment. What, then, need we to seek for any more or any other portion? And therefore David saith, Ps. xvi., 'God is my lot, my portion, and inheritance.'

Now, if any be asked, if they will have an inheritance, will they not have it in a fair ground? they will say yea. Then seek it in Christ. This, then, overthroweth the going to saints or angels, to Peter or the Virgin. For though it were true that go to Peter thou shalt not lose, if to the Virgin thou shalt not lose, which yet is most false, for they cannot help us, but though it were so, that we might have one piece in one, another in another, should we not rather go to Christ, where all our inheritance is laid together?

Lastly, he is *above all principalities*, viz., howsoever in his base estate he humbled himself underneath the angels, yet he is the head of them all, and above all angels and archangels, so that none of them are able to cross his will, or control him in his kingdom.

SERMON XVII.

In whom also ye are circumcised with circumcision made without hands, by putting off the sinful body of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ; in that ye are buried with him through baptism, in whom ye are also raised up together, through the faith of the operation of God, which raised him from the dead. And ye, which were dead in sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, forgiving you all your trespasses.—COL. II. 11-13.

WE have heard of the graces in our Saviour Christ, of the fulness, perfection, and abundance of them, and likewise the apostle entereth into this, that all fulness of graces are in him; so they are in him, not for himself, but for us. And therefore the apostle proceedeth in the argument and in that point still, as if the apostle should say, Yo have heard, &c.

Having all fulness and sufficiency in him, it followeth that you have that in him you seek out of him, which is the circumcision of the fore-skin, who was circumcised not for himself but for you; and in him you have a more excellent circumcision than that you so greedily pursue. For that is made with the bodily hand of man, which can go no further than to the flesh; whereas your circumcision is made by the finger of God, which entereth into the heart, whereof one fruit is the putting off of the whole body and mass of sin, which riseth and buddeth from the carnal corruption of original sin, ver. 11.

Where if you reply that Abraham and other the godly patriarchs and fathers under the law had this circumcision of the heart, and yet notwithstanding received the outward cutting of the foreskin for a seal of that inward circumcision, I grant; and therefore you have, for an outward seal of your inward cutting and purging of the corruption, the sacrament of baptism, a seal that with Christ you are buried to sin, that sin is truly mortified and deaded in you, that it should no more reign over you, nor you should live unto it. Another fruit also of this circumcision, whereof baptism is a seal, is that with Christ you are raised up unto newness of life, through faith, which God hath wrought in you by the same almighty power whereby he hath raised Christ from the dead, ver. 12.

And no marvel if you have need of the same power to quicken you which the Father declared in the raising up of his Son, seeing you also were dead in sins, shadowed and set forth by the circumcision of the flesh, and are quickened together with him, in having all your sins forgiven you, ver. 13.

The sum is a more special declaration of the fulness and accomplishment we have in Christ. The parts are, that in Christ we have circumcision inward of the heart, with the outward sign thereof, because we have sanctification and justification.

Sum: That the Colossians and Christians have no need of the circumcision which was in times past, and therefore we are to consider of,

First, The sacrament of circumcision to God's children in times past, and of baptism under the gospel.

Secondly, Of the notable fruits and benefits sealed to us in these sacraments.

Here we are to consider of the order of the apostle, according to the custom of the Scripture. For the Scripture useth to set the handling of those last which were named first, and the handling of those things first which were named last; and, therefore, the apostle having spoken of and named philosophy first, and then of the rudiments and ceremonies, he first speaketh against the ceremonies of the law, and because circumcision was most stood upon and chiefly regarded, therefore the apostle doth speak of circumcision.

For circumcision was especially commended in the law, as that which was performed by all, and was appointed as a badge under the law to distinguish the church of God from the world; and therefore they that were not circumcised were abominable, as Moses was in danger for his son uncircumcised, Exod. iv. 24. Again, because the circumcision was four hundred years before the law was, and therefore they thought it should not be abolished with the law. But the apostle answereth that we are and need not to be circumcised, because Christ was circumcised for us, having no cause for himself to be circumcised. Now circumcision is a note of pollution, but we are cleansed in Christ. And a man is not to be circumcised twice, but once we are circumcised in Christ, and therefore need not to be circumcised again. Further, we have baptism instead of circumcision, and therefore it is not belonging unto us.

Again, he maketh two kinds of circumcisions, outward and inward. The inward is the circumcision of the heart: 'The Lord circumciseth the heart,' &c., Deut. x. 31. And therefore the Israelites bragged of this, that they were the circumcised of the Lord: this is our boasting that the apostle saith, 'We are glad of this, that the hardness of our heart is taken away, our rejoicing is the circumcision of the heart.'

So also there are two sorts of baptisms, for which cause the apostle saith, Heb. vi., 'Among the principles of religion, wherein every one is to be instructed,' nameth the doctrine of baptisms, i.e. inward and outward, for as the circumcision was inward and outward. And therefore it is that Stephen, according as the prophets used, upbraided them, Acts vii., 'O ye

stiff-necked and uncircumcised,' because though they were circumcised in body, yet not in heart.

It were a strange thing if a man should say, men now that have come to baptism, that they are unbaptized, and to those that come ordinarily to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that they never received it, and to those that come to hear the word and prayer, that they never did it, viz. they never effectually did it, in regard that they have not done it in heart, in that they have not forsaken their uncleanness and looseness of life.

Nay, rather, it may be said of them that they have received the sacraments as seals of condemnation, and the word as a testimony of their judgment, and prayed to pull the vengeance of God upon their heads. And therefore we are to look that as they have the outward, so we labour and feel to have the hand of God inwardly in reforming us, and renewing us, and working grace in our hearts.

The fruit of circumcision and baptism is the putting off the body of sin. It is the use of the Scripture to compare sin to filthy garments or nakedness : Rev. iii., 'Buy of me garments to cover thy nakedness.' So it is with us, that if we have not the righteousness of Christ, we are naked, or else clothed with the rags of sin. And therefore as men are ashamed to come into the presence of others naked or in filthy rags,—for as Joseph might not come before the king before his prison clothes were taken off, Gen. xli. 14,—and are we not to be much more ashamed to come into the presence of the Lord in our sins, which are far more loathsome to God than any filthy rags to man ?

Again, our state of Christianity is compared to a race, 1 Cor. ix., which was used among the Romans, where in their exercises, to the end they might be more light to run the race better, or to do any other exercises, they used to put off their clothes, so far as with honesty they might, that they should be no burden or hindrance unto them ; even so, sin being a greater burden than any clothes to hinder our race, is to be cast off.

By flesh the apostle meaneth the natural and original corruption, viz. the proneness and readiness to all naughtiness, and untowardness, and unfitness to anything that is good.

And by the body is meant the fruit of it.

By flesh is not meant that the creature itself is this filthiness, for that is a creature (for then Christ's flesh could not be pure) but it is meant the spiritual corruption and infection in the body and soul joined together.

In that sin is called the body of sin, it noteth that every one hath in him, or about him, a body of sin ; so that look how many members of the body every man hath, and how many powers of the soul, so many instruments of sin, it noteth that whatsoever part or faculty is in a man naturally, is nothing but a lump of sin : his hand a hand of sin, his foot, eye, &c.

Therefore, chap. iii., mortify your earthly members of sin, filthiness, uncleanness, noting that until our members be mortified and renewed, they are members of sin and uncleanness, yea, they are 'weapons of unrighteousness,' Rom. vi. 13, which until they be purged and cleansed, tend only to the hurt either of ourselves or others.

Here, then, we may know that we are truly baptized, and have the true circumcision of our Saviour Christ, if we daily labour more and more to cut off the members of sin in ourselves ; whereas if we continue in sin, and go on more and more in our sins after baptism, then we may assure ourselves we have no part in Christ, and our baptism is not profitable.

Obj. Then the apostle answers a privy objection. Why, had not Abraham and the rest the circumcision of the heart before the circumcision of the body, and yet it was needful for them to have the circumcision of the body, as being the seal of the other ? Why, then, should not we be circumcised ?

Ans. True, they had the inward circumcision before, and the outward circumcision after, yet we need not the outward, for baptism sealeth that to us, which circumcision did to them ; for there is but one seal of it. Now they had outward circumcision, and ye have baptism, and need but one seal, for baptism doth sufficiently assure you of the inward circumcision.

Ye are buried with him in baptism. Not that baptism doth it, but baptism is the seal of our burying with Christ ; for the properties of the thing signified, is often given to the seal, as in the Lord's supper the name of the sign, bread and wine, is given to the thing signified, which is the body and blood of Christ. And baptism is called the washing away of sins, for as water washeth the filthiness of the body, so doth the blood of Christ, signified by the water, wash away our sins. So here to be buried is given to baptism, which is only the work of the Spirit of God by faith in Christ, which doth bury sin in us.

Baptism doth represent our burial unto sin, because though it be not utterly killed so long as we live, yet it is weakened. In the Rom. vi. it is said that we are dead, buried, and raised up in baptism, viz. baptism sealeth all these unto us.

But it is to be observed, that he maketh choice of the burial only, rather than the death, to signify the truth and assurance of our mortification, that our mortification is certain, true, and without all dissimulation ; it is indeed a hatred of sin.

For as men may seem to be dead, which are not so indeed, but if they be dead and covered, then we are assured they are dead indeed, so true mortification is here signified to be a true hatred of sin.

And that was in times past notably set forth by the custom in the primitive church, their descending into the water, which signifieth death to sin, and remaining in the water, their burying to sin, and their rising out of the water, rising to righteousness. So that

hero is shewed what ought to be true mortification. For there may be some in a swoon or trance, which seem to be dead, and yet revive again, so there are many that think themselves dead to sin, if they can abstain from some sin they have used before, and do some good things they did not before, yet it doth not follow that they are therefore mortified; for they may do it for some sinister cause, for hope of gain, &c., and after fall to it again; and therefore it is necessary that there be a burying, viz. that for conscience to God, for the fear of God, and love of him, that he hath been merciful unto us, we mortify sin and walk in holiness of life, to continue in it, which mortification importeth.

For he that continueth in mortifying sin, he only is truly mortified; therefore, Acts xiv. 21, [they] strengthened the disciples and exhorted them to 'continue.'

Doct. Here also we learn that baptism is the same to us that circumcision was to the people of God under the law, ver. 1; where we have to confute the wretched opinion of the Anabaptists, which will not have any baptized before they come to years of discretion; but if they under the law [were] circumcised under age, then now we may baptize under the gospel them that are infants. Again, in the parents, if one be faithful, their children are holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14, and much more both being holy, sanctify their children, therefore, to be baptized.

Oly. But it is said that the apostles baptized; it is said they baptized households, but no mention is made of children, they are not named.

Ans. Could they baptize whole households, and not baptize children? Again, in that baptism is the same to us that circumcision was to the Jews, why should not our children be baptized, as theirs were circumcised?

This doctrine serves also against the papists, that think that children unbaptized are damned. But that

cannot be, because there was no such thing to be feared of those that died before circumcision, being the eighth day; for we see the Lord commanded that circumcision should not be before the eighth day, to the end that the children should be strong to abide the great smart of the wounds. Now if as many children as died should be condemned, the Lord should have provided ill for his people, that for a small temporary commodity would deprive them of everlasting life, 2 Sam. xii. 16-23. David before his son died, he had fasted and lain on the ground; after he heard that he was dead, he rose up, and washed his face, and shewed himself comfortable, and did make profession that he should 'go to him'; whereby it is evident he was persuaded he was in peace, whereas we see that he mourned for his son Absalom, whom he loved as dearly, because he feared his condemnation, for that he had lived and died wickedly.

Again, if the children be unbaptized, it is not theirs but their parents' sin; and should it be condemned for the parents' cause?

Again, not the want, but the despising and contemning of the sacrament is dangerous, Gen. xvii.; and therefore they only that were despisers of the circumcision were to be cut off, Deut. xvi. Now the children cannot despise it, and if any despise it, it is the parents. Besides, the sacraments are notes of our salvation; and that salvation doth not depend upon them, but upon God's favour and free election before all worlds.

We have heard of the benefits we have in Christ through baptism, to be the dying unto sin and in sanctification. The last benefit we have in baptism is the quickening of us in Christ, which is the forgiveness of sin and justification. And therefore seeing we have both this justification, and all sanctification and dying unto sin, sealed to us in baptism, it appears therefore that all the parts of our reconciliation are sealed to us by baptism.

SERMON XVIII.

And putting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, he even took it out of the way, and fastened it upon the cross; and hath spoiled the principalities and powers, and hath made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them in the same cross. Let no man therefore condemn you in meat, and drink, or in respect of any holiday, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days; which are but a shadow of things to come; but the body is in Christ.—COL. II. 14-17.

WE have heard how the apostle doth propound to himself to refute two errors: one of vain philosophy, which appeared to men to be wisdom, but not true wisdom.

The other was that the Colessians had crept in among them, such which held the necessity of ceremonies. We have heard how the apostle, amongst other ceremonies which he confuteth, beginneth at the ceremony of circumcision, which confutation he

having entered upon, proceedeth in confuting the use of the other ceremonies, as eating of meats, drinks, &c.

As by his death he hath gotten us forgiveness of our sins, so by the same he hath blotted out the hand-writing, which was a witness of our sins as of a debt, wherein we stood bound to God; which hand-writing standeth in the rites and ceremonies of the law, which by his death is not only blotted out, by the same nails wherewith his blessed hands and feet were nailed to

the cross, this as it were was nailed thorough and cancelled, ver 14.

Neither is it marvel if by his cross these ceremonies are done away, seeing upon the same cross he spoiled the devil, and all the power and host of hell, and having disarmed them, he made open show of them, triumphing upon them in his cross, wherein they thought to have utterly vanquished and overcome him, ver. 15.

Wherefore, as by this means circumcision is taken away, so is likewise taken away all difference of meats and days, ver. 16.

Therefore as in Christ no man ought to condemn you for the use of any meat or drink, or in respect of a feast day, whether it be new-moon or the three solemn Sabbaths, so if any man, either ignorantly or maliciously, condemn you, you shall not need to fear their judgment, considering that these things were but shadows, which have no more place, Christ the body being come, ver. 17.

The sum is, the doing away of all the ceremonies of the law by the death of Christ, and therefore of these, which the Colossians erroneously retained.

The parts are the effect of Christ's death in all the ceremonies of the law; and the application of that effect to the present errors of the Colossians.

The purpose of the apostle is that because that the ceremonies of the law generally are done away by the death of our Saviour Christ, that therefore the ceremonies, which the Colossians made conscience of, are done away.

Here we are to note, first, the power of the death of our Saviour Christ in taking away ceremonies; secondly, the applying of that effectually to the particular estate of the Colossians, that they were in by reason of false teachers.

For the first, the use of ceremonies of the law were divers: 1. To make a partition wall and separation between Jews and Gentiles, that neither should come one to other, till it should be taken away. 2. Another use in them was to train up the Jews, being children, in the principles of religion.

Another use here mentioned, that they were a hand-writing, testimony, and a witness unto the people of their sins, that they were bound unto God.

For what meaneth their manifold washings, but that they were exceedingly filthy, and loathsome in the sight of God. And what was the killing of the beasts and sacrifices, but to confess that themselves were worthy to be slain by reason of their sins? Further, their circumcision, which they bragged so of, did note the uncleanness of the whole man, because out of that part came the seed, which proceeded from every part of a man, and therefore all these were testimonies of the wrath of God due to them.

But the benefit we have in our Saviour: 1, our sins are taken away; 2, the hand-writing is not only blotted out but cancelled, for the same nails that went

through his hands, pierc'd the hand-writing and ceremonies.

And therefore what injuries should we do to ourselves, and what injury to our Saviour Christ's death, if we should hold the necessity of them. For what is he that, having the debt paid, will not labour by all means to have the writing cancelled?

Now, it were a far more foolish thing if the debtor, when he had payed the debt, would desire his creditor to keep the bill still.

And this was not only the sin of the Jews, but now it is the fault of them, and far greater, which will have ceremonies in the church, not God's, but man's ceremonies, which are far worse.*

So that here, see the difference of believers under the gospel and law.

For, howsoever the death of Christ was effectual to them, while the law stood, yet the obligation and writing was in God's hand.

Obj. Why, then, was the hand-writing in the hand of God? *Ans.* It was in the hand of the good creditors, and it was by God's will that it should be so, to keep them under; but now it is his will that they should be taken away, and therefore it is a fearful thing in us, that when God would have it taken away, we will have it remain still in his hand.

Here we see that the children of God may have assurance of everlasting life, and their hope is a certain hope, contrary to the papists, which make it doubtful according to our common speech. But the apostle saith, Rom. v. 5, 'our hope cannot be confounded.' The certainty of this hope the apostle proveth both by that our sins are forgiven, and the debt bill is put out.

Another reason the apostle rendereth, is for that our Saviour Christ hath vanquished the devil, the prince of devils, called powers and principalities, Eph. ii. 2, for they were created strong and have not lost much of their strength. This is taught by our Saviour Christ, Mat. xii., the strong man, that is, the devil, keepeth the house till a stronger cometh, which is our Saviour Christ. When our Saviour was upon the cross, the devil assaulted him most strongly; for at his first entering into his ministry, the devil tempted him sore, Mat. iv.; though he left him for a time, yet he came to him again; but especially he used all his strength to torment our Saviour Christ upon the cross, when the wrath of God was upon him; that occasion he took to vex our Saviour as much as he could, which in the 22d Psalm, which is the psalm of the passion of our Saviour Christ, the devil is compared to dogs, to bulls of Basan, which tore his hands and feet, and compared also to lions and to unicorns, so cruelly did they use him. And yet whereas they thought to have triumphed over him, even in the very cross he spoiled them, and overcame them, and triumphed over them, and led them captives.

* He means (I take it), such ceremonies as are urged as necessary, and parts of God's worship.

And therefore we see there is no cause we should be ashamed of our Saviour Christ, seeing he hath overcome, and we are conquerors in him, and therefore to boast in that, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv., 'Death where is thy sting? Hell where is thy victory?'

And this is matter of comfort, that we are to deal with one that is mastered and conquered already, with one that is a coward, and therefore, 'if we resist him, he will fly,' James iv. 7, but if we give place to him, then he will use us and torment us as a tyrant. And therefore we are to take courage over him, being thus overcome by our Saviour Christ. For as the victory, which David had over Goliath, was for all the people of God, so is the victory of our Saviour not for himself, but for us.

Thus much for the taking away of the ceremonies by our Saviour Christ. The application of this doctrine to the Colossians followeth.

Doct. The office of a good minister is not only to deliver the doctrine generally, for then the Colossians had gone away without comfort, but he must apply it particularly. And as it teacheth ministers to deliver and apply particularly; so the people are to learn that they must be content to hear of particulars, as of the general; for will they say, let the minister teach of adultery, but let him not speak of me, but Nathan said to David, 'Thou art the man,' 2 Sam. xii. 7.

Let no man judge you, i.e. if any man take this boldness to condemn you for eating of those things, doing those things, let it not grieve you.

The meats which were forbidden by the law were those which did not chew the cud, or which chewing it had not cloven feet, &c. But now by the gospel those things are left to our liberty, for if the word of God do teach us we may eat it, then we are to eat it, so it be with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. iv. 5. For now

to the clean all things are clean, Titus i. 15, Rom. xiv. 20. And though this liberty be left us, which was bought by our Saviour Christ, yet it doth not take away authority from magistrates, for navigation, or by reason of want, to abstain from some meats at certain times in the year.

For the feasts and new-moon. In the new-moon the Lord had commanded, in regard of the benefit which God gave by the lights, they should have feasts.

Sabbaths. There were three great feasts in the year: first, at Easter, when came their corn in, wherein God commanded them to celebrate a feast of thankfulness, and therein was the passover celebrated.

Pentecost was at that time of the year, that the fruit of the vines were gathered.

The third feast was of tabernacles, when all fruits were gathered in.

This is not meant of the Lord's Sabbaths, for it is said *Sabbaths* not *Sabbath*. Again, the Lord's day was never no ceremony, for it was before all ceremonies, even in the beginning of the world, before there was need of Christ. And therefore the Sabbath day here is not meant; but it is yet to be kept wholly, and holily unto the Lord.

Again, our Saviour Christ, prophesying of the things that should come to pass forty years after his death, willeth them to pray that their flight should not come, as in winter, so not on the Sabbath day, Mat. xxiv. 20, whereby the Lord's exercises should be hindered, which might increase their grief.

Last reason; because these were shadows, and therefore to cease now the body was come. For our Saviour Christ was the body, and therefore what a madness is it in men, that being desirous to look upon one, had rather to look upon his shadow, than upon the person himself?

SERMON XIX.

Let no man at his pleasure bear rule over you by humbleness of mind and worshipping of angels, advancing himself in those things which he never saw, rashly puffed up with his fleshly mind; and holdeth not the head, whereof all the body, furnished and knit together by joints and bands, increaseth with the increasing of God.—COL. II. 18, 19.

Of the false doctrine that the Colossians were bewitched withal and infected by false teachers, there were two kinds: one which came of the inventions of the brain and wits of men; the other were those ceremonies which were once God's ordinances, enjoined by Moses, as the ceremonies of the law. And first we have heard how the apostle hath confuted those errors, which were concerning the maintaining the ceremonies of the law; now he setteth himself to confute those errors which were of men's invention. As if he said,

Having spoken of the elements of the world, which are the ceremonies of the law, I come now to the

vain philosophy I gave you warning of. Against the which observe this rule: First, that you give no man, of what show soever, this power over you, that for his own lust, in matters pertaining to God, he usurp authority, howsoever the doctrine he brings carry a show of humility. As for example, those that teach the worship of angels as means to come the more easily unto Christ; in which thing, what do they else but thrust themselves into things which they never knew, only grounded upon a proud conceit of their fleshly mind, notwithstanding their great pretence of humility, ver. 18.

Which error ought so much the more to be ab-

horred, as they that are infected with it do not (indeed, whatsoever they do in word) hold Christ fast, which is the head of his church, Eph. iv., of whom the whole body, as it were by joints and bands being furnished and compact together, is both nourished and increased with that increase which God both alloweth and is giver of, ver. 19.

The sum is, to condemn the doctrine of men's brains. The parts are, against doctrines of men's brains, namely, the worshipping of angels; and the reason against them.

The sum, then, is, to set forth unto us how they ought to beware of the doctrine of men, taught by men's own heads, as namely the doctrine of worshipping of angels, which is set for all others.

First, Of the errors, which was among the Colossians, which they were infected withal.

Secondly, The reasons which the apostle useth to overthrow, knock in pieces, grind to powder this and all other such errors.

First, For the worshipping of angels; we are, 1, to know that God only is to be worshipped; that is, with a religious kind of honour and worship. Indeed, there is an honour and worship given to magistrates and superiors, but that is a civil honour. And therefore, Deut. vi., 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,' and not other idol gods. And on that our Saviour Christ gathereth this conclusion, Mat. iv. 10, 'Thou shalt serve the Lord alone.' A manifest example of this we see, Rev. xxii. 8, 9. Saint John being a worthy servant of God, who, when the angel which God sent unto him had shewed him such glorious and excellent things, being ravished therewith, fell down and worshipped the angel. But the angel, being moved, saith, Beware, take heed: he cuts short his speech as those that are moved with anything. And he giveth him a reason why he should not, for, saith he, 'I am thy fellow-servant;' for though my message be glorious, yet I am appointed of God to do it, and am his servant. Heb. i. 14, the angels are ministering spirits to serve, as the sun, moon, and stars; for as the angels are ministers to serve Christ, so they are to his servants, being one with him, and therefore we are not to serve them.

Obj. Whereas we see oftentimes of angels that appeared, as in the book of the Judges, the angel that appeared to Samson's mother and father, Judges xiii. 15, 16, 23, when they willed him to stay that they might worship him, he bid them; and so in other places, therefore, it may seem angels are to be worshipped.

Ans. But that doth not follow; for we are to consider that where any angel was to be worshipped, it was the Angel of the covenant, Mal. iii. 2, the Son of God; who, though he took upon him a body to execute the function he was sent to do by his Father, which body he presently left off, yet he appeared to the end that he might signify that he was afterward indeed to come, to take our nature, and to unite it

unto him. And he was to be worshipped, being not a created angel. But for the other angels, they are not to be prayed unto; contrary to the papists, who wretchedly abuse these places of Scripture.

And if the angels may not, much less can or ought the saints to be prayed unto. And if any, the angels rather, who attend upon the saints of God to their good, but the saints know not our estate, and therefore can help us much less. And therefore Elijah saith to Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 9, being to be taken away, Hast thou anything I should do for thee? tell it me now, for after I cannot do thee any good. And a further reason why they are not to be prayed unto, nor the angels neither, because they understand not our hearts: for we cannot express our own hearts, as Hannah could not express her grief, 1 Sam. i. The Spirit of God only doth understand, 1 Cor. ii. 11.

The reasons the apostle useth. 1. 'Let no man,' saith he, 'take that authority over you, and judge over you.' Where he taketh the similitude alluding to the custom of the Romans, who in the sports of running, &c., had judges of the game, and whomsoever they judged to be worthy had the garland. But saith he, 'Let no man be judge in your faith,' neither stand upon any man's judgment to believe that they say; for there is no man judge or lord over a man's faith: 2 Cor. i. 24, 'We are not lords over your faith.' This the apostle rebuketh the Corinthians, 2 Cor. xi. 20, for that they suffered themselves to be buffeted by the false prophets, viz., to become servants unto them in their souls, as to be bound to whatsoever they said or taught, and so also became to be servants unto them in their bodies. So was it in the time of popery, when every *Sir John Lack-Latin*, whatsoever he said, all was believed. So is it in those that will yield unto the judgments and opinions of men in an error, which is to admit a judge into the church of God, whereas there is none but Christ alone: James iv. 12, 'There is one law-giver, which is able to save and destroy.' And therefore we are not to take man's authority in the word of God and matters of religion, but to examine his doctrine, as the men of Berea did, Acts xvii. 11. And therefore let no man take that authority, as to desire to have his word stand in matters of religion, neither are we to give this authority to any.

Here further the apostle taketh away their objection, which come (they say) in humility, they would not presume to come directly unto Christ, but by the angels, as unto a prince we will go by the servant. Was not this a great humility and meekness, not to presume to come unto Christ rashly? But under this show the flesh doth mask.

Doct. Here we see that we have heard before, that under the show of truth and godliness oftentimes come fearful and dangerous errors; and errors oftentimes have a fairer show than truth itself, as the bait, that seemeth to the fish to be good meat.

And be it that it bo humility, yet is it but a blind humility, which is broken out without the light of the word.

Doct. That whatsoever hath not the word of God, and is not grounded on the word, though never so humble, it is ignorance, Rom. viii. 14, 23. If not grounded on the law and the prophets, it is sin. This is one argument.

Another is, that this is not humility, but an intolerable pride and arrogancy. For what an arrogancy is this, that a mortal man will take upon him to talk of that he never heard of, of the word of God? Again, what a wretched arrogancy is it for a mortal man to resist and contradict the ordinance of God? For as there is but one God, so there is but 'one Mediator,' 1 Tim. ii. 5, and if they will have more they must have more gods. This is the apostle's reason. For there can be no mediator between God and us but Christ alone; for he is most fit to be a day's man, that can best agree with both the parties.

And who can be better than our Saviour Christ? for he communicateth with God in his Godhead, which saints and angels do not; and he hath greater communication with us in his manhood than the saints, for he is our head. This the apostle hath a notable place for, Rom. viii. If thereto be another mediator and intercessor, then there is another hath died for us, and another sitteth at the right hand of God.

To return to their pride. To make another mediator is nothing but a proud thing. For is it not a great pride to do contrary to the commandment of God? Peter, John xiii., when our Saviour would have washed his feet, he would not, but denied again and again; which, though it seemed an humility, yet it was great pride, not to obey the commandment of his Master.

A greater reason he allegeth, ver. 19, because they held not the head. All errors are dangerous, but this is most dangerous of all, to take away the head, as which take away our Saviour Christ. And therefore the apostle Peter saith, 2 Peter ii. 1, in the latter days shall come such as shall teach pernicious heresies, denying the Lord. For as it is in the hurts of the body, those hurts, though small, yet being in the vital parts, as brain, heart, &c., do cost the life, whereas other great wounds will not; so it is in religion; some errors do not hurt the life of the soul, but those that are against the head points of religion kill the life of their salvation.

Whatsoever doth overthrow the foundation doth overthrow salvation; as in popery, idolatry, and worshipping, &c., making another head of the church.

And, unless it be of the Godhead, all their doctrine is not only errors, but a clean apostasy, for they corrupt all other points. Indeed, there be errors, if they held only and none else, as free-will, &c., they might be saved; but if they come to this, as to hold worshipping angels, &c., overthrowing the foundation, they exclude themselves. Christ he is the only head of the church, which conveyeth life to all his parts, and to appoint worship to any other is to take him away.

This overthroweth the papists, that will have the pope to be the ministerial head, which is a foolish thing; for as the head is the highest, so is our Saviour Christ alone, therefore not the pope.

Again, the head giveth life and motion to all the body, which our Saviour only doth, the pope cannot.

Again, in that they say the pope is a ministerial head; but our Saviour Christ needeth none, being present by his Spirit to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii., giving directions to the church.

And the apostle, shewing that our Saviour is the head of the church, describeth it to be tied, as the members of the body to the head, so the church to Christ.

Again, our Saviour is the head of the church, to convey life and sustenance to all the members. And he giveth nourishment not to all alike, but to some more, some less, as they need; for the greater members have more need of succours and relief.

Doct. Not to envy those that have more than we; for if the Lord hath bestowed more on them, it is for our good.

Again, in regard that the members are members of one body, and agree with the head, we learn,

That if we be the members of Christ, and joined unto Christ by faith, we must be joined together one to another.

For as when there is a member out of joint all the other are grieved; so if we be not joined in heart, it sheweth that we are not right in Christ.

Our unity must be in Christ only. 'Oh how good and how pleasant a thing is it for brethren to live in unity,' Ps. cxxxiii.; where we see, if we be joined together in Christ, we shall be partakers of all the graces of God, which, being poured out upon Christ, shall descend as the oil which was poured on the head of Aaron, which came even to his skirts. And as the dew of Hermon watereth the valleys, so shall it be with us. The bond whereby we are to be joined one to another is love, which is the bond of perfection, Eph. iv.

SERMON XX.

Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the ordinances of the world, why, as though ye lived in the world, are ye burdened with traditions (as touch not, taste not, handle not: which all perish with the using), and are after

the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in voluntary religion, and humbleness of mind, and in not sparing the body; neither have they it in any estimation to satisfy the flesh.—COL. II. 20–23.

THERE were among the Colossians two sorts of false doctrines, under covert, brought in among them: one, of the ceremonies of the law, which now were taken away; the other, of the inventions of man's brain. Of the first, viz., of the circumcision, and Sabbaths, we have heard, and of the use of them now overthrown. For the other, which had a vain show of wisdom, we have heard, on the worshipping of angels, that though it have a show, yet hath it no wisdom at all in it. Now he proceedeth to other devices and corruptions, which were crept in among them, in regard of which the apostle speaketh after this sort.

Now seeing you are dead with Christ, by whose death you are delivered from the ceremonies of God's own law, wherewith, as with certain rudiments, the people of the Jews were trained to further perfection, which now they have attained unto, in the doctrine of the gospel, why, as though you lived still in the world, do you suffer yourselves to be charged with the ceremonies of the world? ver. 20.

I say that which you and your false teachers say, Touch not such a thing, taste not such a meat, handle not such a one, ver. 21.

All which things, seeing that through the use of them they are consumed, have no strength to life everlasting, especially being nothing but the doctrines and commandments of men, ver. 22.

I deny not but that they have a colour and show of wisdom, partly in that in them there is a worship over and above that which God hath commanded, to whom no service is sufficient which we can do; partly through a kind of humility, and partly in a hard usage of the body, which yet are of no price, seeing they are of things wherewith the flesh is filled, ver. 23.

The sum is to set forth unto us a confutation of certain ceremonies intended to be brought in among the Colossians, by certain false teachers. Now here, first, we are to consider of the things and corruptions themselves; secondly, of the confutation of the corruptions.

Corruptions are spoken of generally and particularly: 'Touch not, taste not,' &c.

Which, though they be not particularly named, yet they may be conceived well enough, as touching of some bodily things, and tasting of meats.

Here we observe, that howsoever men may be dainty of their commodities and of their liberties, and will go to the prince before they will go one whit from them, but come there a false teacher into the pulpit to persuade them from their Christian liberty of meat and drink, they are easily persuaded unto it, though to their own damage and trouble.

As the Jews would easily, to make a calf, be

brought to forego their earrings. So that, howsoever these things are dear unto them, yet in manner of religion (or superstition rather) they will spare no cost, as we see in times of popery, and therefore the apostle upbraideth to the Corinthians, that the false prophets could do what they list with them, and tread them under feet; so that in superstition, and contrary to the service of God, they will part with anything; in God's service they will not part with a jot. In the particular, the apostle useth a notable figure, bringing in the adversaries themselves speaking, 'Touch not,' &c., to shew how much they had gained of them, and how far they were carried in their superstitions, as not to touch or taste.

Where we see the apostle meeteth with that corruption and superstition in popery, as if he had seen it. For we see that none might taste any flesh on Friday, and therefore mothers, if children had tasted it, would have wiped their teeth.

And for touching, we see how that none might touch the holy water, and none might touch the host, though indeed it was no sacrament, for there was only the bread, and therefore they must have their gloves on. Howsoever our Saviour himself would suffer himself to be handled and touched, and took children in his arms. And this superstition of popery, indeed, did begin within an hundred years of the apostle, as the stories testify, that in three days, nay, six days, they came to such an abominable superstition that they would not take meat, and if they took any, they would take dry bread, or some unpleasant meat. Nay, further, some to the end they would not take any delight in their meat, they would not eat but riding. And howsoever in those times the abstinence was greater, yet for the latter popery, the profession of this abstinence continued, even amongst those gluttons and tun-bellied monks and friars, which lived in their surfeiting and gluttony.

And indeed, until a long time there was no law of fasting, but every one did as he thought good, but after came in the punishment of the papists, that they that eat flesh should be counted lowlers.* For the confutation of this, the apostle saith, they are dead with the ceremonies of the law. For if those that were once ordained by God, and were profitable for the training up of men to the service of God, were taken away, then much more ought those, that were invented by the device of man, and were never profitable, but rather hurtful.

And if those that were once holy were rejected, much more ought these, that were the profane inventions of men, should take no place.

And howsoever, indeed, the ceremonies of the law

* That is 'Lollards.'—ED.

were borne withal for a time, and (as one saith) as an ancient matron gravely and honourably brought unto her grave, and therefore the apostles did bear with them, yet they would never suffer the ceremonies of the Gentiles to be kept, and rejected them, as being unworthy of anything, but to be cast into a hole. And such were the ceremonies of the papists, many of them being borrowed from the Gentiles, as the holy waters, &c.

And therefore this place is a sufficient hammer to batter in pieces all men's ordinances; for seeing God's ordinances have given place, much more they.

A second reason against these ceremonies, is for that those things, which they put holiness in, did 'perish with the use of them.' For the meats going into the stomach, and after into the draught, as our Saviour speaketh, Mat. xv. 17, the ceremonies about them therefore could do a man's soul no good, for they could not come to any further than the belly, if they come so far, as the holy water doth not. And therefore the apostle saith, Rom. xiv. 17, 'the kingdom of God standeth not in meats and drinks.' And in the Corinthians, they are of no profit, especially being the ordinances of men.

Obj. Are not outward things profitable, because they perish with the use? What say you of the water in baptism, and bread and wine in the Lord's supper? Are they not for the strengthening of the faith, &c.? and yet they perish with the use, for if a man do not eat after, they shall not live.

Ans. Howsoever they perish, yet they are the commandments, not of man, but of God, and therefore he giveth the blessing unto them, which he hath ordained them for; and therefore they are profitable unto us, to assure us in the mercies of God in Christ; whereas other things, which are men's devices, are not.

Obj. After the apostle meeteth with an objection, which might be made of these ceremonies. 1. We do these things, which indeed are the doctrines of men, but can we do too much unto God? For when we do anything of our own will, we shall declare our dutifulness unto God; for if a servant be commanded to thresh a quarter a day, and he do a quarter and half, shall he be condemned? So do we.

Ans. This hath but a show of reason and wisdom, whereas there is none; for why doth the servant more than he is appointed? It is because his master knoweth not how much he is able to do. But God is infinitely wise, and appointeth every man his task as he is able, and none ought to go beyond, and therefore, howsoever we may exceed men's commandments, and please them, and do well, yet it is not so with God.

Here, then, we see the abominableness of the works of supererogation; that a man can go beyond the

performance of the commandments of God, whereas none is able to perform the least aright, this is a detestable thing.

Quest. Another objection; it is of humility to crouch to these ceremonies, and is it not a good thing to be humble?

Ans. But every humility is not commendable, for, 2 Kings xvi. 7, Abaz, as wretched a king as ever was, whenas the king of Israel, and the ten tribes came against him, sendeth to Tiglath-pileser, saying to him, 'thy son and servant;' whereas he was a king as good as the other, and in regard of the profession of God, should have gone before all other. In Isaiah lvii. 9, it was said to the Jews, 'Thou didst humble thyself unto the grave;' whereas they should have humbled themselves to God alone. So in Isaiah ii. 8, 9, it is said, the people of Israel humbled themselves and crouched to the idols, which is an abominable humility and baseness, and a pride in that they rise up against God's commandment.

Obj. This is to tame the body by fasting.

Ans. Fasting indeed is a good thing if well used, but so to fast as to dishonour the body, and to disable it to glorify God withal, is to be condemned; for the body is honoured, when it is kept to be strong and able, cheerfully and thankfully to walk in the service of God.

Thus the wretched abuse of the papists in the fastings, and Jesuits in whipping themselves, was a detestable thing unto God, as in the priests of Baal. But that humiliation which is by a diligent and careful walking and labouring in our calling, to the end that by idleness the body be not puffed up, is a commendable humbling and keeping down of the body, but that of the papists was most abominable, seeing they made their whippings and stripes answerable to the passion of our Saviour Christ.

Again, the apostle saith, howsoever they seem, yet, saith he, these are nothing worth. For howsoever, in times of affliction of the church, and upon special occasions, &c., there be greater need of humiliations, but of these ordinary humiliations, whenas the body is too much kept under, is contrary to that which the Lord requireth. And therefore it is that the apostle blameth Timothy for this, 1 Tim. v. 23, who, though he were an excellent young man, yet had this infirmity, that he kept his body too much under, for which cause he would drink nothing but water.

And the last reason is, that these were, for the filling of the flesh, viz., they were but belly-matters appertaining to the flesh, and therefore perishable with the flesh, which hath been spoken of before; or for the pleasing of man's fleshly mind, therefore to be avoided.

SERMON XXI.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.
—COL. III. 1.

WE are now, by the grace of God, come unto the second part of this epistle, where the apostle doth deliver certain moral precepts of godly life and conversation ; and here the apostle sets forth, 1, those things that are general, to the 18th verse of this chapter, and then certain particular duties, of parents, children, masters, and servants ; and after he returns again to give precepts unto them all in general.

Being through faith ingrafted and incorporated into Christ, as hath been said, and as yourselves profess, as touching sin, dead and buried with him ; and as touching newness of life, quickened and risen again ; now if in truth you be risen with Christ, then as Christ rising remained not on earth, but ascended up into heaven, where under God, as touching his manhood, he is exalted in power and majesty above all powers and principalities in heaven and earth, so you, by seeing and seeking after the graces that come from above, ascend up whither he is gone, ver. 1.

The sum of all, which is a general exhortation to holiness of life and sanctification.

The parts are two exhortations : 1, to newness of life ; 2, to mortification day by day, till we be slain by death itself.

There are some things to be learned of the comparing that before with this : 1, After the apostle had laid down the grounds of true doctrine, and overthrown the false, he now teacheth wholesome duties of good life.

Whence we learn, that except we be grafted into Christ, we cannot possibly bring forth any good works ; and therefore the apostle layeth down first the doctrine of justification by Christ alone ; and therefore if men have not faith, the best works are sin, not to speak of nunneries, which are the nests of vermin.

Further, this is to overthrow the papists, that think by the natural power they bring into the world, before any grace is given them of God, they can do good works, and after they merit and deserve it, whereas it is evidently taught here, they are all sin before they be grafted into Christ.

A second thing is, that the apostle, upon the doctrine of Christianity, buildeth good works ; and therefore in the epistle to the Romans, he telleth that nothing can be done without faith, then after he exhorteth to good works, Rom. xiv. 23. So to the Galatians, having preached faith in Christ, he persuadeth them to do good works. In vain we make profession of good works, and bring forth nothing in our life and conversation : James ii. 26, ‘ Faith without works is dead.’ If a man knew all the things in heaven and the earth, and he were mounted up as high as the

angels, yet if his life be not answerable, he had been better never to have made profession.

When the apostle hath spoken against circumcision, new moons, and holidays, save the Sabbath, of touching and handling, a man will say, What ! will you have us do nothing of this ? Then let us set the cook on the cook, let us eat, and drink, and make good cheer, and take our pleasure. The apostle answereth, that the Lord hath not taken away the yoke to follow our own lusts, but to glorify God thereby. And therefore it hath been found that they have taken more pains to go to hell than others have done, because we will not fast, and pull down our bodies ; but they condemn papists’ alms, because they give none themselves.

First point; an exhortation to quickening and newness of life.

If ye have been raised, &c. ; where the apostle layeth us to our trial, and giveth us a notable trial whether we are of Christ, for then we are raised up to heaven ; but if we be grovellings here in the things of this life, then we are not risen again, but are on earth, for all these go together ; for he that is grafted in Christ, he is quickened, and he riseth with Christ, for he rose not on earth, but into heaven.

Now let us examine whether we are risen with Christ, which is if we ascend, which may be known if we seek the things above.

Seck; that is, to have a care ; for that a man seeketh he desireth to come unto, and takes care for, and so the apostle saith, a man must study and muse with himself. So Solomon willeth we should dig, and labour for wisdom, otherwise it is no sign that we are risen with Christ.

Now let us consider if we be in the number of those that seek after heaven. There are found many that seek for things of this life, and change countries to make themselves rich. But how many have come to seek the word ? Nay, when they have it brought to their door, they do contemn it. These are far from being raised with Christ.

There are two things in seeking : 1, knowledge ; 2, practice.

Now let us examine whether our ears are bored, and whether we gape for knowledge, as the earth doth for rain. So saith David, when he was in the wilderness pursued by Saul, ‘ Oh how have I desired to come unto thy tabernacle ! ’ Ps. liii., though he knew never so much. Let us labour to be in the number of these ; but if we have been slack in this, then let us see what we have been in the other, for it is easier to know the will of God than to practise it.

Sitteth at the right hand ; i.e. where we must con-

tinue in knowledge and practice, as also to teach us that Christ sits.

After he sets forth our seeking by the cause, for if we have no favour of the things that are above, we will never seek them ; for till such time as we have a love to the things above, it is impossible to seek for them.

And therefore it was well said that the delight doth perfect the action ; where the desire is, there will be doing.

Memorandum. Ps. exix. 97, ‘ Oh how I love thy law ! and therefore my study is in it all the day long.’

So that without love we should not love and study after it. Oh, taste and see how good the word of God is ! If you had once tasted it, you would seek after it.

The apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2, exhorteth them to avoid all malice, guile, and envy, and as newborn babes to desire the sincere milk of the world : *If you had tasted.*

And he saith *tasted*, alluding to young children newly born, that at first will not taste, but the mother useth some means, but after they come to it ; so if we have tasted of the word, we will seek after it.

SERMON XXII.

Set your affections on things which are above, and not on things which are on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, which is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.—COL. III. 2-4.

WE are entered into the second part of the epistle, which is an exhortation to a good life, drawn from the former, in the first chapter.

Set your ; i. e. love not the things that are on earth. Now we are to know what things we are to savour of, that we savour not of these.

These ceremonies that were before spoken of, as touch not, taste not, &c., these are earthly things, which a man must not set his mind on.

There are other things on earth, as goods, &c. ; we must not affect them ; *i. e.* not set our minds on them and our affections, and much less on drunkenness, &c. ; we must not have to do with ceremonies and drunkenness, &c. ; these we must not so much as savour, no, not have anything to deal with.

Neither are we to set our mind on those that are lawful, as on apparel, goods, nor meats and drinks, &c., 1 Cor. vii. 31. We must use this world as if we loved it not. For these are so contrary, that one cannot love them, but we must hate the other ; no man can serve God and mammon, Mat. vi. 24.

The reason, ver. 3: if we be truly dead, then we must needs taste and savour of these. For as Christ after death rose again, so, if sin be dead in you, then you will rise to the taste of the things in heaven ; and the reason why we love this world so, is because we have no hope of a better, and therefore are loath to leave this. And here also, because it may be said the Colossians are subject to troubles, besides the sins that they carry about with them ;—

To this he answers, it is true it is hidden, that the world seeth not this salvation, and hidden from you ; that is, that you have not such a feeling of it as you shall have ; and yet, as a thing hidden, that it shall be seen.

Hope is of things that are not present ; then, seeing our salvation is by hope, therefore we shall receive it. Things that do scarce appear, yet they are, so of this :

Cant. i., look not on my blackness : it is true that I am black, despised in the world, yet I am comely, and like the trees of cedar and the tents of the Arabians, which tents were to be removed when they had dwelt a while in a place, yet I am as fair as those in the curtains of Solomon.

So that we see here that the church is not so beautified and glorified here as it is to be esteemed.

The second reason is, because he is the keeper, it is safe ; no man can take it away, and therefore, Cant. ii. 6, the church is compared to a steep rock, where no man dare come to her. And this is that that Peter sets forth, 1 Pet. i. 5, that we are preserved by the power of God. It is ready to meet us when we depart ; and the power of hell is not able to prevail, and therefore it is said it is hid with God.

Third reason. It is hidden in Christ, who appears not as he is, nay, not as he shall be ; for he is appointed to have all his subjects. As it is a glory for a king to have many wait upon him, so he esteems it a great glory to have his children about him.

Doct. And therefore the doctrine is, if the master’s glory be hidden, why should not the servant be content not to have that glory as he should, or to be discouraged at our light setting by, seeing we are in a strange country ?

For a man regards not his estimation in a strange country as at home, no more should we. Here we are strangers, what matter is it though we be contemned. Another thing, that when Christ shall appear we shall also appear, that is, in the last day with him in glory. This is a singular privilege for us to think of.

Isaiah lx., where, describing the estate of the children of God from that now is, he useth a fine speech. There shall be as great difference between your state now and that estate you shall then be, as there is between the brass and the gold, and betwixt the wood and the brass, &c.

You shall not have the sun and moon: it is marvelous delightful to see the light of the sun and moon, but then they shall not need it, for God shall be their light, and he shall not go down.

This is more notably set forth in the Revelation, where it is said, Rev. xxi. 10, 21, that it is a city on a hill, full of precious stones, impossible to be found in the world, the gates of precious stone, the streets pure gold. These are means to point at, not able to express the glory of it. If we will hear of this further, it is said that when Christ was translated, Peter took such delight in seeing Moses and Elias translated, that though he were in his natural body, yet he took such delight, that he said, ‘It is good for us to be here,’ let us make our abode here, Mat. xvii. 4.

And then sure if they had such delight when they were in their natural corrupt bodies, then much more when they shall be changed; then the joy shall be such as no eye hath seen nor ear hath heard, &c.

And then it will follow that they will leave those filthinesses that they have here with them, as it is said in the next verse. It follows,—

Mortify, &c. This that followeth standeth in two parts: first, in forbearing to do sin; and second, to do those things that are good, and the first lasts to the twelfth verse.

And first for mortification, which is partly laid out in these two verses.

And to the intent you may carefully seek after them, ye must first savour and set your affections upon the things that are above, and consequently not to set your affections upon either the former corruptions of false doctrine, or else upon the defilements of a corrupt conversation of life; or, finally, upon the perishable transitory things of this base world, all which are mere earthly, verse 2.

Unto which distaste of earthly things you are called, in that you, being risen with Christ, are consequently dead with him. Where, if haply you should object that there is small wisdom to quit your former life, not being assured of another, and should ask how it should appear you live, seeing, besides the afflictions

you are exposed unto, you feel the daily encumbrance of sin, which dwelleth in your mortal bodies, it is true that it is not so apparent as that which is hidden from the world, and of yourselves not so fully and feelingly understood. Howbeit that ought not to dismay you; first, for that it is laid up with God, who is a true keeper of it; and secondly, for that, as your life is hidden, so is Christ’s life and glory, who is the head, ver. 3.

And lastly, for that when Christ, of whom you have life, shall be made manifest in glory, then shall you also with him appear glorious, ver. 4.

Wherein we have to consider of the exhortation to abstain from certain vices; secondly, the reason whereupon it is laid, viz., the punishment. It seemeth very strange that he should call sin the members of a man’s body; and the reason is (1.), because the apostle elsewhere calleth sin a body, Rom. vii. 25; and then it is fitly said that the particulars thereof be the members of this body. (2.) Our sin may be called members, for that they are so grafted and deeply set as members in the body. And this is notably set forth in Mat. v. 18: ‘If thy eye offend, pluck it out, &c.; if thy foot, &c.; where our Saviour doth, as Paul doth here, compare sin to our eye, and hand, and foot; for that we come to them by our sight, by handling, yet we must pull them out. So violently we must strive to pull out our sins, as a man to have his eye pulled; yea, and though they were sins as dear unto us as our eye, our hands, feet, &c., excellent instruments, and dear. Now some will abstain from drunkenness, stealing, and yet are given to whoring; and therefore Paul insinuates that we should strive with sin unto blood, Heb. xii. 4. Every Christian that doth not strive even to blood, if need be, he shall not be crowned. (3.) Lastly, they are called members, because look how many members we have, so many instruments we have to allure us to sin, which we are the more to beware of. And therefore, as the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 19, as we have given our members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, so now let us give our members servants unto righteousness in holiness.

SERMON XXIII.

Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, the inordinate affection, evil cupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for the which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: wherein ye also walked once, when ye lured in them.—COL. III. 5-7.

WE have entered upon the fifth verse, which we are now to recontinue.

Wherefore being assured of another life, mortify your members that are earthly and carnal. If you ask what? I cannot reckon up all, but I will touch some, those specially that you are infected with, whereby you may easily conceive of the rest, such as are fornication, unclean behaviour, wantonness, evil con-

cupiscence, and covetousness, which (besides the excessive desire of goods) is a kind of idolatry, for that men do put their trust in riches, that are covetous, ver. 5.

For every one of the which, the wrath of God cometh on those that remain in them, ver. 6.

And the rather mortify these sins, as in times past you have practised them, when being given unto them,

your natural corruption, as a kind of life, gave power and moving for the practice of them, ver. 7.

The sum and drift is an exhortation to the mortification of sin, and especially of such sins as had greatest sway among the Colossians.

Consider the exhortation in the 5th verso, and the reasons whereon it is grounded, contained in the 6th and 7th verse.

The exhortation is, ‘mortify your earthly members,’ or members upon the earth, &c. One reason is drawn from the punishment, because the wrath of God is against such persons as offend in these or any of them.

Another reason, because they had been such persons, and therefore must not be so hereafter. In the exhortation we have heard that a man is a whole lump and body of sin, whereof every sin is a member. Again, because sin is so nearly joined and hardly tied to us that they can hardly be drawn from us.

They are called earthly, because they draw us from heaven and heavenly things. Which is meant, not only of the body, but also of the soul, not in regard of the substance of it, for that is a spirit, but in regard it tendeth unto such things.

Now we are to come to the particularities. The apostle speaketh against certain sins against the seventh commandment, of adultery; which the apostle nameth, viz., not those which all men hold to be sins, and confessed to be so, as whoredom, &c. But he setteth against those sins which the world doth smally account of : 1, fornication; 2, uncleanness; 3, wantonness; 4, concupiscence.

For the first, *fornication*. The apostle speaketh against it; for amongst the Gentiles it was accounted to be no sin, or rather a small sin, doubting of it. And therefore, Acts xv., in the general council, the apostles concluded that it should be abstained from, as a most shameful and horrible sin. So that, passing by the grosser sins, he beginneth with this.

This the apostle proveth to be a shameful and vile sin. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, for hereby God is put out of his possession; for seeing our body should be consecrated unto God, what a shame and horrible thing is it, when men should make it a stews to the devil!

Again, another reason; in that he that committeth fornication maketh his body the member of a harlot, 1 Cor. vi. 15, which should be the member of Christ, so that as much as in him lieth, he maketh Christ also a member of that body.

Again, another reason; this sin is against the body, for other sins are without the body, and the occasion, as is the sin of drunkenness. But this is against the body itself, making it filthy and unclean, and subject unto diseases, 1 Cor. vi. 18.

This sin the apostle standeth so much upon, because that they esteemed so light of it. And is not the same thing now, that men lightly esteem of it and count it a trick of youth, &c., and if the worst come thoy can

marry the party with whom they have fornicated; but the Lord doth not so esteem of it.

2. *Uncleanness* meant all manner of unclean words and deeds, which do not reach unto the act of fornication, as all manner of unclean kissings, and speeches tending to uncleanness, though they come not to the height of fornication; and therefore we see how lightly men esteem of thesos also, yet they are horrible and vile in the sight of God. And howsoever men say, they think no hurt; yet as where we see smoke, we say is fire, so where these are, there is a fire of concupiscence.

3. *Wantonness*. The word signifieth passions; but as in other places where the apostle speaketh of this sin, so here it is taken for wantonness, whereby is meant all lightness of the eyes, apparel, gaits, or other behaviours, tending also to fornication and uncleanness.

Lastly, *Concupiscence*, which is the least sin against the 7th commandment, which is the desire of uncleanness with consent, Mat. v. 28, for desire without consent belongs to the last commandment, which our Saviour Christ noteth.

Another sin which the apostle speaketh against is *covetousness*, coming near to that uncleanness.

First, By covetousness is not only meant when any do wrest and wring whatsoever they can lay hold on. As the prophet (Jer. viii.) saith, ‘They get their goods falsely.’ But there is besides another thing, when they have an earnest desire of the muck of the world, which cannot be satisfied, as the prophet Isaiah saith, chap. v. 8, ‘They desire to join house to house,’ &c., signifying an excessive desire of riches, which cannot be satisfied.

But further, another covetousness, which here is to be abhorred, when a man rejoiceth in his riches, and takes them to be his credit or honour, as in Job xxxi., where he purgeth himself, as of trusting in his riches, so also of his rejoicing in his riches, though he was the richest man in all that country.

Thus he that is not content with his estate, but thrusting himself into divers trades and occupations to enlarge himself, is a covetous person. And this is a notable sin, and so much the more fearful in that it is not called in question by men, by the church, nor punished.

This the Scripture speaketh against, as that it is a vain and unprofitable thing, for whatsoever they scratch they shall carry nothing out.

Again, 1 Tim. vi. 9, it casteth a man into divers evils and noisome lusts, for it maketh him to have a shipwreck of conscience, and so is that which deprives him of all good arguments of comfort.

But, of all places, none more notable against this sin than this place here, that it is idolatry. Now idolatry is strictly and largely taken.

Strictly, when a man doth fall down and worship idols and images instead of God.

It is also taken more largely; for that when a man's

heart is drawn and stolen from God, and is set upon anything whatsoever, as upon meat and drink ; the glutton maketh it his god, &c. ; so of uncleanness, &c. But yet more notably covetousness is called idolatry, because, first, it maketh him that is covetous to be proud, and lift himself above others ; again, it makes him to trust in his riches, which adultery, and fornication, and other sins, do not work in a man ; for none is proud and confident in their filthiness, &c. And therefore it is that the apostle, both to the Ephesians, Eph. v., and here, calleth this idolatry ; and therefore idolatry is not only among the papists, but even to be found amongst us that have renounced popery. And would they could not charge us of this idolatry, when they say there is so little alms to the poor, &c.

And the apostle nameth this idolatry to the Colossians, from whom idolatry was abandoned ; and therefore noteth that it is a shame for them, having abandoned idolatry, to maintain this. Thus much of the exhortation from sin.

The reasons follow. The first is drawn from the punishment of God, that the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience in these things.

This is a great and fearful thing, to have the wrath of God against a man. The loving countenance of God is a great and excellent thing ; and therefore David saith, Ps. iv., Thy loving countenance I desire above gold, corn, or oil. Ps. xxxi., in the loving countenance of God is life and joy ; so, on the contrary, in his wrath is death and sorrow.

Solomon saith, Prov. xvi. 12, that the anger of a prince is like the roaring of a lion after his prey ; what is, then, the anger of the eternal God ?

By the wrath of God is noted the effect of the wrath of God, that punishment, death, condemnation, which is the reward of the wickedness spoken of before, proceeding from the anger of God as the cause.

Obj. Why doth he say the wrath, and not the punishment ?

Sol. I answer, to the end that we should, as loving children, more fear and be grieved at the wrath of God, than at the punishment.

Another reason ; because where the wrath is, there will come punishment : if God be angry, he will certainly punish.

And howsoever men do not regard this, because the magistrate doth not punish, yet if he neglect, yet the Lord's sword is ready drawn, and fearfully will revenge ; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God, Heb. x. 31.

In that he saith *is upon*, in the present tense, it noteth a continuance of the punishment of God, so that even the very sin itself is a punishment of God ; and therefore, Rom. i., when men would not hearken to the word, the wrath of God from heaven is poured upon the sons of disobedience, by all that rabble of

sins there recited in the most of that chapter, which are judgments of God.

So that howsoever men, feeling no smart upon their bodies, yet if they could feel indeed the wrath of God in these, they should see how fearful a punishment it is to be given over to drunkenness, fornication, and the like. We see the effects of God's wrath on this sin. In Numbers we read of twenty and four thousand slain for this sin ; and for the defiling of Dinah a whole city was destroyed, Gen. xxxiv. 27.

And, therefore, seeing sins unpunished upon the whole land, therefore it behoveth the magistrate to look narrowly, so far as the law will reach, to punish this sin sharply. The not punishing of the ravishing of the Levite's wife, cost the Benjamites much blood and loss, Judges xix. and xx. 46, 48.

And howsoever we renounce the error of the Manichees, yet we in practice affirm their assertion, that God was a fierce and sharp God under the law, but a merciful God under the gospel ; but God is the same, Ps. cii. 27, and will the rather punish this sin, because we have received more graces than they under the law, and perforce we are to look for greater and heavier judgments if we do provoke him.

And this belongs to ruffians, and to them which say, so that I be spared unto the end, I care not, God is merciful ; yet let them know, that if they defer their repentance till the end, and live in their pleasure, yet though they live the life of Methuselah in their pleasures, one moment in hell shall exceed in torment all those pleasures.

Upon the children of disobedience, ver. 6. Where we see that the Lord's judgments are executed upon the unfaithful and wicked, which the Lord doth, as the Lacedæmonians, who, to make their sons hate drunkenness, would make the servants (which they loved worse) drunken. So doth God after a sort, who, to make his children hate their sins, doth punish the wicked, but his children are not punished, and yet they escape not free ; for we see David, for his adultery and murder, what judgments followed, 2 Sam. xiii. and xv. and xvi. 22, his own concubines were defiled by his sons, he was almost driven from his kingdom, and one son slew another ; yea, after his death, blood ceased not from his posterity, as in the beginning of Solomon's reign ; yet this is not a punishment ; for a punishment is death, which only is to the wicked, but to God's children a correction.

Another reason which the apostle rendereth, is because such they had been in times past, ver. 7, and yet were received to favour and mercy by the Lord. And therefore it behoved them to beware of their former sins, to walk like new men, being received into a new state.

For what a mercy of God is this, to receive us, when we have even spent ourselves in sin ? What master, when a man hath spent himself and his strength in another man's service, will take this man to himself,

and make him his servant? But the Lord doth so; he taketh us, though we have been gross sinners, and he doth account us as if we had not sinned. As in Ezekiel, he saith, chap. xviii. 21, 'If the righteous man forsake his righteous ways, I will forget his righteous deeds.' Contrary, 'If a wicked man repent, and do the thing that is good, he shall not die, but live.'

Doct. This teacheth us not to continue in our sins; for if we be fallen, let us rise. Is it not a shame to take a fall and lie by it? But sin is a fall. 'It is sufficient,' saith St Peter, 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4, 'that we have spent the time past, as do the Gentiles.'

Again, we are wounded by sin, and therefore we ought to return to be healed; for what wounded man would not desire to be healed? And therefore we are to return betimes to the Lord, to forsake our evil ways, how long soever we have lived in them before.

Walked. Here the apostle maketh a difference between the wicked man, that goeth forward in sin, and the children of God, that fall by infirmity; as David, that having failed, yet continued not in it.

When ye lived in them, ver. 7. This is the cause that they walked in sin, because sin was strong in them: it was so powerful with them, as that they lived in it. And therefore we are to mortify sin in us, that it may decay; for the life of sin is the death of a sinner, and while a man lives in sin, he is in the state of death.

And, therefore, let us examine ourselves, whether sin have that force, that it makes us come at a call; let us search if we live in it; for if we do, then shall we walk and run after it, and perform the desires of it. Therefore he hath said, 'Wherein ye walked, when ye lived in them.'

SERMON XXIV.

But now put ye away even all these things; wrath, anger, maliciousness, cursed speaking, filthy speaking out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his works; and have put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where is neither Grecian nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, free: but Christ is all, and in all things.—COL. III. 8-11.

THE apostle proceedeth in the exhortation begun. The drift, as we have heard, is to move us to holiness of life and good example, which he hath spoken of in the second chapter before. 'But now' (saith he) 'put away all these things; wrath, anger,' &c.

As if he should say, seeing that you are called to the hope of a better life, lay aside far from you, as things the which you cannot abide to be in your sight, not only the grosser sins before mentioned, but also all manner of sin, without endeavour whereof there is no true mortification. For example, anger, heat, from whence cometh malice, which breaketh out of the mouth by railing and reviling, ver. 8.

Specially, when you cannot truly charge them, take heed you lie not one against another, but putting off, as an old and rotten garment, the old man, which you bring from your mother's womb, with the actions thereof, as it were so many tatters, ver. 9;

Now, lest being found naked you be ashamed, put on, as a new and comely garment, the new man, which if you ask what it is, it is the same part which is renewed in you, to the likeness of him that made you, which likeness consisteth in the knowledge of God, ver. 10.

Whereby shall come to pass, that howsoever the false teachers place in it being a Jew rather than being a Gentile, circumcised rather [than] uncircumcised; and the opinion of the common sort is, that the Barbarian and Scythian is in a far worse case than the Roman, and the servant but a beast, in respect of the freeman, yet with God there is no difference, seeing

Christ, whom by a new birth they have put on, is in all, and is all that God respecteth and accepteth of, ver. 11.

The sum of all which is a very earnest exhortation to godliness and holiness of life. The which standeth, first, in the proceeding of mortification, and putting off the old man.

Secondly, In the quickening and putting on the new man.

Now lay aside, ver. 8; as if he should say, Heretofore ye have walked loosely before ye were called; but now ye are called, this state requireth another condition, another kind of life. And therefore those that have heretofore lived in idolatry, wantonness, drunkenness, seeing now they have gotten a new name, and profession, must walk after a new sort, holily.

And therefore the apostle exhorteth in another place after this sort: 1 Thes. v. 4, 'Ye live not now in darkness,' but by the gospel are called to the light of the gospel. Now, men in darkness have on ragged garments, but in the light will go more cleanly. And therefore the apostle saith, ver. 7, 'They that are drunk, are drunk in the night;' but now that ye are called to the gospel, your light can never go down in that regard. And therefore it is a shame for you to give yourselves to drunkenness, uncleanness, covetousness, malice, evil speaking, &c. So that it is a more fearful sin which is committed under the gospel.

Thrust away all; the word signifieth a violent thrusting away a thing with hatred.

Doct. We learn that we are loath to abhor and cast away sin from us.

And there is a great cause we should abhor sin, which is a most abominable thing, which the prophet describeth, speaking of the graces of God to his children, saith, Isa. iv. 4, God will wash away their blood, and not only that, but their filth, viz., comparing it to dung and the most filthy excrements, which can come from us.

So that if we cannot abide our excrements, nor the savour of the excrements of others, much more ought we to abhor this, which is more detestable. And therefore if we being in our sweets, and fine apparel, and yet have these about us, what are we but most loathsome and abominable?

All these things. Here is a notable exhortation to mortification, by the which we may learn this, viz., that he that putteth not away all sin, that is, which detesteth and laboureth not against all sin, is not truly mortified. And therefore whereas some by nature, education, ill custom, and bad companions, are more given to one sin than to another, yet we ought as to reject other sins, so these which we are most prone and ready unto.

Therefore if thou abstain from murder, and that as thou thinkest for conscience of sinning against God, though thou do not kill, yet if thou commit but adultery, thou art guilty of all the commandments of God, James ii. 11; for he that hath no conscience of some one commandment, hath no conscience of God's commandments at all for God's cause.

It followeth: *wrath, anger, malice, &c.*

More particularly these words, ὕερν, and ὕμος signify both one thing; howbeit in regard of the diverse dispositions of them in whom they are, they be distinguished; ὕερν is anger, which continueth in some by nature, that are long ere they be angry, but if they be angry it is hardly quenched, being as the coals of juniper, and these, because they are not easily provoked, therefore they favour and flatter themselves that it is no such great sin.

Again, the word ὕμος, is also an anger according to the disposition of another sort of men, which will be soon hot, and soon cold, and therefore think it a small sin, but both these the apostle here condemneth; for anger is a grievous and fearful sin, and therefore many heathen have writ against it, as that which for a time bereaveth a man of his wits. In a man of much anger is much sin; for anger is cruel, and wrath raging, Prov. xxvii. 4; anger is a giving of place to the devil, if it exceed, Eph. iv. 27. These sins are the causes; the sins that follow are the effects of these; and they are either inward, viz., malice, or outward, evil speaking, reviling, and lying.

Sometimes for* the word used for malice, sometimes taken for all manner of evil and sin, sometimes for cares, as in Matthew: 'The malice of the day is sufficient for the day,' Mat. vi. 34.

* Qu. 'is'?—ED.

Here it signifieth with anger, a desire to be avenged, and a seeking also to be avenged. This is contrary to the mildness which is spoken of before, and followeth, which is a willingness in men to do good.

This is a thing clean contrary to the nature of God, and therefore ought to be clean contrary to the nature of man, for, as the apostle saith, none will hurt his own body, Eph. v. 29. Now, we are the flesh one of another; and therefore the heathen men say, that every one is a god or devil, one to another.

Evil speaking. This is a grievous sin, as that which taketh away the good name of a man, for we know a good name bringeth comfort unto a man; therefore it is compared to the sweet ointment, Eccles. vii. 3, that comforteth a man; and therefore he that taketh away a man's good name, is as it were his hangman, and murderer, in the time of his trouble, when this comfort should most stand him in stead.

Again, besides that the name of men, the name of God also is blasphemed, for every child of God carrieth the name of his Father in the forehead of his profession. And therefore, Rom. ii., the apostle saith that the Jews caused the name of God to be blasphemed.

Another fruit of malice is reviling, as we see when men are maliciously bent towards any, we see nothing is so vile and filthy, but we will give it in their teeth. And though this be expounded of adultery and uncleanness, yet because that hath been spoken of before, and this is the common-place of anger, it seemeth rather to be referred to it, though the other be an abominable sin.

Again, malice hath another foul and shameful effect, viz., to bring forth lying one of another. For if they can get any shameful report of others, which is true, they will not stick, but cast it forth; but if they can get no truth, they will invent lies against them to disgrace them. But the apostle saith, that though it be true, yet we ought not to revile one another, nor to use any such reports, by repeating their sins; for it is the duty of the magistrate or minister to rebuke, not of a private man in his own quarrel to revenge himself.

Another reason he useth, in bidding us to put off these old rags of sin, where he useth a notable metaphor, comparing mortification to a putting off of our clothes, and sins to filthy torn rags. And therefore as a man will be ashamed of filthy rags, and therefore will cast them off before he come in company, so ought we to do, being come into the church of God.

But especially when we are to come into the presence of God, into the service of God, we are to cast off these tatters of sin, for as if we are to go before a prince we will not go in any loathsome apparel, much less coming into the presence of God should we come in our sins, Mat. xxii.

And therefore our Saviour Christ, when the man came not in a wedding garment, but was in a beggar's garments, bids cast him out.

Obj. But he called beggars, and therefore what other garments can he look for at their hands ?

Ans. It is true, we are all beggars, and worse, nay, worse than the vilest rogues and vagabonds, before we come to him ; but being admitted into his house, he offers us royal garments, which if we put not on, casting away our old rags, our judgment is the greater.

The old man, ver. 9, i.e. the original corruption, which is the root of all sin, and therefore is called sin itself, and a law of the members, Rom. vii. 14-23, for that it giveth direction to all the members, as a law, to do that which is naught, as it giveth direction to the hand, foot, eyes, and tongue, to sin. Therefore in Rom. vii. 25, the apostle saith, ‘I serve in my flesh the law of sin.’ And it doth not only give direction, but as a law it ruleth us ; for we can no sooner have a wicked motion put into us, to be moved to a wicked thing, but presently it setteth us in hand, and setteth us about it, till we be regenerated.

The second part of the exhortation to quickening ; ‘put on the new man ;’ where regeneration and newness of life is compared to a new garment, which is to be laboured to be put on of us, because it pleaseth God, and his holy angels and saints.

And if we desire ornaments to deck ourselves before men, much more to deck ourselves with those ornaments which may be acceptable before God. And therefore these are said in the Proverbs to be ornaments, habiliments, precious chains, bracelets, &c.

That it is called the ‘new man,’ as that which maketh a man anew, though he be but young ; and though he be an old man, yet by this means an old man is made a new man, if he have piety and godliness in him, it maketh him to flourish and bud again : though his hand fail him, yet if he have the hand of faith ; if his foot fail him, yet if he have the foot of holiness and righteousness to walk to heaven, he is in an excellent estate. Whereas contrariwise, he that is young, and is not regenerate, is an old man ; and therefore he that is both unregenerate and old in body, he is in a pitiful case.

What is it to be a new man ? To be renewed in holiness and righteousness. Hereby is set forth what we are by creation, what by nature, what by grace and regeneration. For the first, when we were created, we were made holy, like unto God ; not of the nature of God, but like in holiness and righteousness.

But what are we now ? void of knowledge of God, and of righteousness. For what we know, we only know so much as should make us inexcusable ; no

saving knowledge, much less are we able to walk righteously before God.

The excellent estate that we are restored unto, is here set forth, and in the Ephesians more plainly, Eph. iv. 24 : to be renewed, first, in the knowledge of God ; secondly, in the walking holily before God ; and, thirdly, in walking justly and uprightly before God.

So that now we are to see the excellency of our regeneration. For howsoever the creation of man was a more excellent work than to make the world, and therefore the three persons are brought in consulting together, Gen. i. 26, shewing an excellent work ; but to make a Christian man is a greater work than to make a man ; for then in the creation there was no let nor hindrance. But now since our fall, there are hindrances, as, namely, Satan hindereth, and our own corruption hindereth, and therefore this [is] a more excellent work.

Again, we are restored to a better state than Adam, for his was earthly, and uncertain ; for he might fall, as he did ; we may slip, but we cannot fall eternally, being once called truly, Jer. xxxii. 40, Ps. xxxvii. 24, 28, and 1 Peter i. 5.

Again, Adam was subject to temptation, and therefore by temptation had a fall of the devil ; but the time shall be when the devil shall have no power to tempt us in the heavens. And therefore our estate is more excellent, and this work more excellent.

Quest. Why, then, did God let Adam fall ?

Ans. To shew a greater favour to his children in Christ ; from whence we now learn that those, that have not part in this knowledge, and holiness to God, and righteousness to man, have no part in this regeneration. And therefore let every one examine whether all these be in him, or are begun, or no ; if any be wanting, then there is no token that he is the child of God.

Lastly, whereas he saith, ‘There is neither Grecian, Jew, barbarian, free, bondman, but Christ is all, and in all things,’ he sheweth that all, which are partakers of this regeneration, and are renewed after the image of God, are all of like account in the sight of God, for God accepteth not the persons of any more than of another. The which serveth for the comfort of those that are servants, or in baser estate than other men, that they need not be discouraged thereby, for if they feel themselves renewed in knowledge, wisdom, holiness, and righteousness, their estate is as good as of any in the sight of God.

SERMON XXV.

Now therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel to another : even as Christ forgave you, even so do ye. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body ; and be ye amiable.—COL. III. 12–15.

WE have heard how the apostle, after he hath set down unto us the doctrine of the gospel, hath exhorted all men to holiness of life, consisting in mortification and quickening.

Of the first we have heard, and entered into the second ; we have heard a general exhortation to quickening, which we have heard to be described by the new man, and is more particularly expounded and set forth in this text. As if he should say,

To come to a more particular description of the new man, deck yourselves (as it becometh the elect of God, and such as are holy through his love, the cause both of your election and holiness) with tender compassion, easiness to be employed, humility, mildness, long-suffering, ver. 12.

Which virtues must be declared effectually, not only in forbearing one another, but also in frankly forgiving one another. If any have a quarrel one against another, even as Christ hath frankly forgiven you, even so do ye, ver. 13.

And though those be singular virtues, yet above them all, as the root and mother of them, deck yourselves with love, which is as it were a bond to bind in a bundle, those and all other virtues tending to perfection, and without which there is no soundness in any of them, what glittering show soever they carry, ver. 14.

And though the spirit of the old man within you hath a desire to contend, yet let the peace of God bear the sway and overcome ; unto the which peace you are evidently called, in that you are members of one mystical body. For the better entertainment of which peace, be grateful one to another, as well in conferring as in requiting benefits, ver. 15.

The sum is a declaration and setting forth particularly of the new man, which we are exhorted to put on.

First, he sets forth the particular virtues, then the mother of them.

He had before exhorted them to put on the new man, renewed in knowledge and holiness :

Now a man might ask what this new man is ? and therefore he setteth forth what it is by every quarter of it, what cloth and coat we must put on.

Here the apostle noteth that naturally we are all naked and shameful in the sight of God, and therefore as modest persons will be ashamed to look on their own nakedness ; so we naturally are naked and detestable in the sight of the Lord, and therefore we must be ashamed of our nakedness, and labour to get on those garments whereby we may be holy and covered in the sight of God, which else are abominable in his sight.

This was it that the Lord exhorteth the church of Laodicea, that she ‘ thought herself rich,’ &c., but thou art naked and poor, and therefore come and ‘ buy white clothing of me,’ Rev. iii. 17, 18, to cover

thy filthiness and shame, which provoketh me. But how shall we buy, seeing we have nothing to give the Lord ? The prophet answereth, Isa. lviii. 1, 2, ‘ buy for nothing.’ And therefore seeing for costly apparel, comely only in the sight of men, we will both give exceeding much and go for it, what a shame is it for us that we will not go for this apparel, which maketh us costly in the sight of God !

And these are not only comely, but precious garments, and costly. In Prov. iv., and in divers places, they be called jewels, and pearls, and precious ornaments, and bracelets, &c.

Here, first, he setteth the causes, then the virtues. The causes : 1. Because we are chosen and elect, therefore to do good works, to walk holily and put on the cloth of righteousness, as the apostle saith to the Ephesians, chap. i. 4, ‘ He hath chosen us, that we should be holy and blameless.’ Where we see what a false charge the papists give upon the holy doctrine of election, that it is a doctrine of looseness, whereas the apostle teacheth us it is a doctrine to move to holiness of life.

Another reason, ‘ because ye are holy.’ Here he taketh a similitude from the vessels of the temple, set apart for the service of God in the temple ; and therefore we see the fearful judgment of God upon Belshazzar, ‘ for profaning’ the vessels of God in his banquet, Dan. v. 3, 30. Even so, we being separate and set apart by holiness of life to the service of God, it is a shame for us to give ourselves to serve men, or our own lusts and affections.

A third reason is in the word *beloved* ; ye are loved of God, therefore love the things that he loves.

Quest. How shall I know that I am the beloved child of God ?

Ans. If I find in me the fruits of the grace of God ; I must examine myself therefore, whether I have faith, whether I have the love of God in me or no ; whether I have any righteousness in me or no. And therefore the apostle Peter sheweth, 2 Peter i. 10, that we may make our election and calling sure by good works. And therefore the cause that men stumble and break their necks in matter of election is, that they will go to the university of election, before they have been at the grammar school of calling and sanctification. And therefore they argue, he that is elected shall be saved, live he as he list (which yet is false, for the elected shall live holily), and so contrary, if I be a reprobate, I shall be damned, live I never so holily and godly. But this also is false ; for as he that is elected to salvation must needs be sanctified, so he that is not cannot. And therefore we are not to climb to the top of God’s counsel to know our election, but must begin below by our sanctification.

Now we are elected all of us, only by the love and

grace of God; we have nothing of ourselves, and therefore none are better than another, nor can help ourselves any whit. And, because we are elected by the free grace of God, it is another reason to prove that we should put on holiness.

The virtues follow. ‘Bowels of compassion,’ viz., the tender affection one towards another, 1 Kings iii. 26, which was shewed whenas the child should be cut in sunder, the right mother her bowels were moved within her at the danger of the child, and by no means would have it divided. This is the compassion which we should have one towards another, even when we see any in danger, much more when they are in trouble, which we see to be often in our Saviour Christ.

Secondly, ‘easiness to be used;’ for so the word signifieth, whereby a man is ready and easy to give himself to the use of other, contrary to the perverseness and frowardness that is in many. This is a necessary thing; for as inwardly thereto ought to be compassion, so outwardly thereto should be cheerfulness of countenance, and readiness to be helpful unto other. This is, as belonging to all, so to rich men especially, because they are ready to fall into this roughness, being puffed up with pride, by reason of riches, as we see in the churlishness of Nabal to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 10.

Thirdly, ‘modesty and humility,’ whereby we think basely of ourselves, and highly well of others; the contrary whereof we see practised amongst us, in that men think too well of themselves, and therfore set a cheap price of other men, contrary to the apostle’s precept, Philip. ii. 3.

Quest. But I shall then think a lie; for shall I think that he hath more knowledge than I, being ignorant?

Ans. We are not so to think; but yet not to think ourselves better than we are. And this is especially meant of sanctification.

And therefore when we see a man live without any outward blot of disorder, we are to think better of him than of ourselves, because we know more evil in ourselves, and can accuse ourselves of more sins than we can do another man, whom we cannot know so well as ourselves, and which hath, peradventure, less knowledge than we.

Fourthly, ‘meekness,’ whereby anger is both prevented and pacified; for whereas he had spoken of two kinds of anger, one sudden and another continued, this doth take them both away.

Fifthly, ‘longsuffering,’ when he will not be provoked to anger, but put it off. This bringeth forth, first, bearing one with another, and not presently to revenge, as the manner is; and secondly, to forgive, for that is the right and true bearing one with another, for else we do not forbear; for there be many that will forbear for a time, but will put it off till a further

time of revenge, which is a more horrible sin, as we see in wicked Absalom, that did make a show of love to Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 20-28, and said to his sister, ‘He is thy brother,’ yet after revenged that injury done to him in his sister with his death.

This forgiveness the apostle proveth by the example of our Saviour Christ, who exhorteth also to forgiveness, if our brother offend, not only seven times, but seventy times seven times, Mat. xxviii. 22; and seeing the Lord hath forgiven us infinite talents, we ought much more to forgive our brother our debt, which is not an hundred pence in respect of the other.

Having set down all these, he after commendeth one principal virtue, viz., that which is the mother of them all, viz., ‘love,’ where we are to see the opinion of the papists, who make love the cause of all the other virtues, because it is the mother.

True, we will grant that love is the mother of them, so that they grant that faith is the grandmother, from which love itself proceedeth, 1 Tim. i. 5; and therefore, as the branches come indeed from the trunk, and receive sap by it, but from the root, so do these graces come of love, from faith. So that love is indeed the mother of these, as the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii., sheweth, that the fruits of love are longsuffering, &c. For as the mother for love doth think all pains to be nothing, because of the affection she beareth towards her child, even so, if we have love, it will be laborious and stirring. And therefore it is not enough outwardly to bow, and make curtsey, unless love be in the heart.

‘Love, the bond of perfection;’ *id est*, wheresoever love is, there will be the performance of all duties; for if there be love towards me, I shall have this man to be my hand to help me, that man to be my foot to carry me, and the minister mine eye to direct me. &c. So that hereby it is that we are all bound and tied together in all good duties.

Doct. And then, he saith, we must have the ‘peace of God to rule us,’ where he noteth, that by nature our spirits are contentious, and ready to fall out; and therefore it is necessary that we let the Spirit of God be the controller of our outrageous affections, as the controller of the house.

Lastly, ‘thankfulness.’ This is another fruit of love, and a singular nurse of peace and quietness. When by gifts men give one to another, and requite one another, they testify their thankfulness one to another. This was the practice of the children of God in their feasts and solemnities, as we see in Esther ix. 19, according as we use, at the beginning of the year, to send new-year’s gifts. And therefore it is a commendable thing, and necessary to maintain love one amongst another, to use to give mutual gifts, and to bid one another to feasts.

SERMON XXVI.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously in all wisdom ; teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with a grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye shall do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, by him.—

COL. III. 16, 17.

THE apostle, in his exhortation, tending partly to mortification, forbearing that is evil, and partly to quickening, and doing good works, hath exhorted to divers duties which are good and necessary to be done of the godly, and dehorteth from the evils to be eschewed. Now he cometh to a more general exhortation, whereby they might be furthered unto all those good duties before spoken, and all other holy duties, which cannot be particularly reckoned up ; and whereby also they might be kept from all evil things which are forbidden.

To the end you may refrain all the vices aforesaid, and practise all the virtues afore spoken, together with all other vices to be avoided, and virtues to be embraced, it is necessary that you be exhorted, that the word of God be as familiar unto you as if now in one house it dwelt with you ; that you have it also plentifully, and, as it were, treasured up against the day of need. Last of all, that you have it in all wisdom, making choicest both of the things that are most important in it, and especially that which doth most concern yourselves, and your own particular use ; avoiding all curious questions, tending rather to strife than to edification of God, which is by faith. And as you must have it for your own use, so also for the use of others ; as well in teaching those that are ignorant, as in admonishing those that walk not according to their knowledge they have received.

And in your meetings to make merry, let your mirth be shewed forth in psalms, singing as well with instrument as with voice ; also with hymns of thanksgiving for benefits received ; and for further variety against irksomeness, which our nature easily falleth into, with songs of praising God for his noble acts ; all spiritual unto the Lord, not only with the voice, but especially with the heart, with such both tune and gesture as may give grace to the hearer, ver. 16.

To conclude ; because it is infinite to speak of all things particularly, whatsoever you do in word or deed, let it be such as calling on the name of God in Jesus Christ, for good direction in them, you may return with thankfulness to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and us, ver. 17.

The sum is a notable and excellent instruction and direction for us in all the ways we have to walk in.

First, consider of a special duty ; secondly, of a general duty of all Christian men.

Special duty, which is to sing and to praise the Lord.

The other general to all men.

The special duty towards God and men, ourselves and other men.

To ourselves, he requireth of every man the proper use of the word to himself, ‘the word of Christ dwells,’ &c. It is called the word of Christ, because he is the author and object of it.

Here he requireth, 1, that it must dwell in us ; 2, it must be richly in us ; 3, with all wisdom.

For the first, we must be familiar with the word of God, for as Eliphaz sheweth the means to be familiar with God is to be familiarly acquainted with his word. And therefore we must be acquainted with it, as with that which dwelleth in our house with us. As a man may have other acquaintance and other business, yet his special acquaintance is in the house ; so ought we to be with the word of God. And therefore it is said we must have the word of God dwelling in us, it must not be loose, as Mat. xiii., the seed by the way-side ; but it must be rooted in us, as the apostle saith. And St James saith it must be ingrafted into us, James i. 21, as the graft into the stock. And, Heb. i. 2, 3, seeing Christ is above all angels, it behoves us to take heed to his word, that we hold it well, and be not as riven vessels, that let it run out. This the apostle speaketh here is notably set forth in Ps. cxix., 2d part, he ‘covered the word in his heart,’ as the husbandman that covereth the seed in the earth, that it may take root, and bring forth fruit. So that this is to be acquainted, and to have the word dwell with us.

Secondly, We must take care that it dwell ‘richly’ in us. We count him not a rich man that can talk of wealth, but that hath his treasures and store-houses richly filled, to draw out in time of need. So must we be rich in the word. And therefore, as the rich man corruptly dealing is never satisfied, but is still desiring more, and is never content with a little, so ought we for the word. Again, as the rich man taketh all pains, and never rests, so we are to labour with diligence for the treasure of the word, for nothing cometh by idleness. And hence it is that because we are not treasured with the word, and have it not in store, we are driven to such distresses in time of affliction and trouble ; and therefore we are to labour to have the word richly dwelling in us, that so we may draw out of our store-houses in time of need.

Thirdly, and especially, the word must dwell in us ‘in all wisdom.’ It must not only be delivered discreetly by the minister (which yet is necessary that it be wisely and fruitfully delivered to every one), but

we must see that it be in us, in all wisdom; which is both in affection and use.

First, It is necessary that we come to the word, not for any sinister end and affection, for to be counted wise, and to talk of the word, or for to have the report of men, but that we come only to it with love of it.

Secondly, In regard of the use of the word, we are to come to the word, not to learn to maintain our own errors and heresies, or to maintain our sins. As because of the drunkenness of Noah, or by the filthiness of Lot with his daughters, to take occasion to maintain drunkenness and whoredoms, this is an horrible abuse of the word. In Amos, chap. vi. 3, 5, 6, we see them reproved that would play with David's instruments, having no skill or art; that is, no heart to use them well. Whereas David had skill by them to stir up his affections. So do they that maintain their filthy dances by David's dancing.

In regard to the use of the word, the wisdom required of us is, that we seek and labour especially for the greatest and chiefest points of religion, as holiness of life and heart, righteousness, temperance, &c., Mat. xxiii. 23; as our Saviour rebuketh the Scribes and Pharisees, These things ye should not have neglected, but especially you should have regarded justice, &c.

Such are they in our time that follow after the doctrine against ceremonies, which they should know, but not neglect other more weighty.

Another point of wisdom is, as to mark those things which belong most especially and generally to all Christians, so to mark and learn those things especially which most especially concern ourselves and our state and condition. Contrary to which are they that, when they hear anything which is against the sins of others, take hold of that presently, but let pass what concerns themselves. Inferiors look to those things that are rebuked in their superiors, and superiors to those things that are reproved in their inferiors, not in themselves, which we ought to regard most. As if we feel sluggishness in ourselves, we are to mark the doctrine which may most stir us up; if we feel hardness of heart in ourselves, we ought to give ear to the doctrine which may soften us.

Thus much of the use of the word in regard of ourselves. In regard of others, we, even all generally, are to help and teach others in the word, so as that we go not out of our callings, usurping public authority, being but private men. Thus, those that have knowledge should teach and instruct them that are ignorant in that which they know not; and, in this regard, a woman may teach another, one brother another, those that have knowledge to teach the ignorant, and in reforming them in that which they know amiss.

Another duty we owe to others, in regard of the use of the word to our neighbour, is, if he fall, to admonish him of his sin, and thereby to help him up. And therefore the apostle saith, 'admonish one another,'

Col. iii. 16, Heb. x. 25. And by admonishing is also understood a comforting of those, and exhorting of them, that do well.

Here we see what a shameful doctrine of popery it is to take away the word from all but ministers. Whereas the apostle maketh it a duty to all, even to women, whom they cannot abide to be teachers, which yet they may in their own houses, giving place notwithstanding to the men, if there be any, but yet they may reprove those that offend in their houses.

Thus much of the behaviour towards men. Towards God the duty is set down, that when we are merry and cheerful, to sing psalms and hymns unto God, ver. 16.

And therefore St James saith, chap. v. 13, 'if any be merry, let him sing psalms;' so that it is a good thing that, partaking of the blessings of God, we should be merry and glad; but our mirth must be to the end we may glorify and praise God for it.

This praising of God, 1, with psalms, which were psalms used with the voice and instrument both, and therefore David saith, 'Arise, lute and harp,' Ps. civ. 2, cl. 4, and bids us sing upon the organs, &c.

And that this word signifieth thus, it appeareth, because in Daniel, chap. iii. 7, there is an instrument called a psaltery: *ἴαντος*, a hymn, is a song of thanksgiving for a benefit received, and therefore our Saviour, after his supper, sang an hymn, Mat. xxvi. 30, viz., for a particular benefit.

Lastly, a song is a more general thing than either the psalm or hymn, viz., wherein we give thanks, not for particular benefits, but for general blessings received at God's hands, as when David praised the Lord for the works of creation, as the heavens, &c., Ps. civ.

Doct. This teacheth us that we should not be a-weary with singing praise unto God. And therefore to prevent our weariness, and to meet with that corruption of ours, he saith, we must change thus, when we are weary of one manner of singing, we must sing another.

Use. These must be spiritual songs, viz., holy psalms and songs, not profane and wicked love-songs; which condemneth the wicked practice of men and women, that though they have so many excellent psalms, yet sing foolish songs to stir up their minds to wickedness.

Again, we must sing 'with grace,' viz., both with a comely and reverent gesture, and with a decent and sweet tune, that it be not a rude tune, but such as may be both understood, and may stir up ourselves and others to glorify God the more.

Again, especially it must be 'with the heart'; for seeing our hearts are ready to be stolen away, we must lay especial weight unto our heart, that all the power of the heart and soul be present and applied in singing to the praise of God, and yet the voice to be used too.

Here we see condemned the songs of the papists, which sing that which they understand not, and therefore with what affection can they do it? And be it that their affection be good, yet their understanding, being

wanting, they sing not aright, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16. Clean contrary unto David, that, Psalm ciii., biddeth his soul, his heart, and mind, and all that is within him, to praise the Lord. And therefore, though the papists should sing never so unto the Lord only, which yet they do not, for they have their songs also unto

the saints, &c., yet it is no true singing which the Lord requireth, when they sing with the tongue only.

Lastly, We must sing them unto the Lord alone; and to him we must sing songs of praise and thanksgiving, and therefore not to the saints, nor to any other creature whatsoever.

SERMON XXVII.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as it is comely in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter unto them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for that is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.—COL. III. 18-21.

THE apostle having discoursed severally and particularly of sundry duties of Christian men, general to all men, of what states and conditions, sexes and ages, soever they be, he now cometh to the particular duties belonging to every one in their particular calling.

Having instructed you in the duties which are general to all, I come to inform you in those that are special, according to the several callings of every one of you, as those which will easily come from you, if you have well profited in the former. Now, according to the order God himself keepeth in the fifth commandment, I will begin with the duty of inferiors.

You wives, therefore, notwithstanding you have other duties, I exhort you, as to that which is hardest for you, wherein you are customably shortest, and being performed, others will easily follow, that you be subject and obedient, as to others that may be above you (as parents and magistrates), so especially unto your own husbands, as that which is the most comely thing of all, because you, I know, strive to comeliness. Which obedience and subjection is not yet so absolute, and so general, but it hath this exception, so far as you are commanded things not unlawful by the word of God, ver. 18.

You husbands, although you owe sundry duties unto your wives, yet specially I exhort you to love them dearly, as that which you are most customably shortest in; and which being thoroughly settled in you, will easily pull all other duties after it. And therefore be not bitter to them, which cannot stand with love, ver. 19.

You children, from a heart subdued, and truly humble, obey your parents, not by halves, and so far as they command things to your liking, but in all things not contrary to the word of God, although it be to the crossing of your desires; for which cause let it be always before your eyes, as a goad to stir you up to this obedience, that in so doing you shall not only please your parents, but do a thing acceptable to the Lord himself, ver. 20.

You parents, abuse not your authority, or the pliable minds of your children, either by commanding things unlawful, or by hard usage of them, to provoke

them to any undutifulness towards you, or to have no courage or comfort to do the things required of them, ver. 21.

The sum of all which is an exhortation, which the apostle giveth to the most straitest bonds amongst men: the first, of the wife and husband; the second, of the parents and children, which are the straitest bonds between men.

But, first, we are to speak of the last verse of the other text, ver. 17, ‘Whatsoever ye do, or say,’ &c. The apostle had travelled in setting forth unto them many special duties they ought to perform, as Christian men and women. And because it were an infinite thing to set down all duties particular to Christians, he wisely comprehendeth all, both those duties spoken of before, and all other duties in this verse, saying, ‘Whatsoever ye say or do, let all be done in the name of our Saviour Christ.’ The like doth our Saviour Christ, who having spoken in the fifth and sixth, and part of the seventh, of Matthew, of the duties to our neighbours, doth comprehend all the duties which we owe to our brother, in all the law and prophets, in this, Mat. vii. 12, ‘Do as you would be done by.’ So here the apostle doth. The like we have, 1 Cor. x. 31, ‘Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ Here we have a very notable rule, that we should not speak, nor do any thing, but that which we may commend unto God in prayer. And therefore every man ought to purpose with himself in the day, to do nothing else but that which is good and right; and this will be a means to keep him from whoring, drinking, and all dishonest things, wheras he is to do only that which he should desire a blessing in prayer of God in, and for which after we are to return to God in thanksgiving again, which none is so senseless as that he will do for his sins and wickedness he hath committed. And, indeed, there is no good thing, whatsoever a man doth, as to speak of law, physic, &c., which of themselves are good, and therefore cannot be good unto us, (though to others they may be) unless we commend them unto the Lord in prayer.

Here, also, we are taught, in that we are to pray to God and thank God for all good things we say and

do, we have them not of ourselves, but from the Lord.

After verse 18, the apostle doth set down a notable exposition of the fifth commandment, *i. e.* beginning at the duties of the nearest bonds; and first he setteth the duty of the inferiors to the superiors. And first he sheweth forth the duties of those which owe common duties together one to another mutually, as husband and wife; and then the duties of them jointly to those that are underneath them both.

And this is the order which the apostle useth, who, having set down general duties of Christianity before, he now cometh to particular; thereby insinuating, that those that have laboured to observe the general, as of holiness, temperance, long-suffering, love, &c., they shall more easily perform these particular duties. This is a notable doctrine, and therefore we see Jethro counselleth Moses to choose such rulers to help him as hated covetousness, Exod. xviii. 21. This is a general duty, to hate covetousness; noting, that if they were faithful in that, they would be good governors, and magistrates, and captains. And therefore we see Joseph, having all which his master had under his hand, save his wife, is said to have ordered all things well, Gen. xxxix. 5-9. The reason is, because he feared God, that is, because he had the general duty.

Again, therefore, we see that servants by the general duty of doing their duty in the sight of God, are persuaded to obedience to their masters. So that this is to teach us to labour principally for to have the love and fear of God, and to do our duties as in the sight of God, which is a means to help us in our particular calling.

And as it is a true thing, that if I love all men and perform duty to all men, as much as I can, then much more will I do it to my wife, children, and those that depend upon me, according to this rule of the apostle.

And as that is true, so also the diligent and true performance of the duties of our particular calling is a great means to help, and to confirm us in the general duties, Rom. i. The apostle taking an oath, and calling God to witness, confirmeth the faithfulness of his oath, by his faithfulness in his particular office of his ministry. And to Timothy he saith, 1 Tim. iii. 5, that he that is not able to govern his wife and family privately, is not fit to govern publicly in the church or commonwealth.

For the particular duties, first, of wives. In the epistle to Titus, chap. ii, 4, though the apostle requireth love of the younger wives to their husbands and children, yet they are not so ready to be behind hand in love, as in this duty of subjection; for when she is admitted to the friendly and amiable use of her husband, that she hath 'power over his body,' 1 Cor. vii. 4, as he of hers, therefore she thinks she is shut out from subjection to his authority, and therefore it

is that the apostle so stands especially upon that duty of subjection; for concerning love it is usually more exceeding in women than in men. And therefore David, in his verses on Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 26, saith, his 'love exceeded the love of women.'

But he insisteth upon her obedience, and he bringeth this reason, because it is comely. It had been a notable reason to have persuaded her to subjection, because the Lord commands her will to be subject unto her husband; and howsoever before the fall she was subjected unto him, yet after the fall her yoke was heavier, and therefore the Lord saith, Gen. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 'Thy will shall be subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' Again, as 1 Cor. xi. 9. He might have said the woman was made for the man, not the man for the woman; and the woman was taken out of the man, Gen. ii. 18, not the man out of the woman.

And a more notable reason is in 1 Tim. iii. 14. The woman was deceived, not the man; for he was led away by affection to her, and was not deceived. And to Titus, chap. ii. 5, the apostle rendereth another reason of this subjection, 'lest the gospel be evil spoken of,' therefore the wives should be subject to their husbands.

But here the apostle rendereth this reason, that it is comely; because women delight in neatness and comeliness. And howsoever they think it a disgrace to be subject, yet the apostle saith it is more comely to be subject. And St Peter standeth much upon it, teaching, 1 Pet. iii. 1-6, that the comeliness of a woman, which is most comely in the sight of God, is, that she be quiet, humble, and obedient; and therefore if women will have their rings, jewels, and bracelets, as an ornament and comeliness to them, let them be decked with this, to be humble in obedience to their husbands.

And yet this subjection is restrained, that it be 'in the Lord,' ver. 18, and Eph. v. 24. If he be too severe, and command things not fit, yet she is not to reject the yoke of obedience, but go under it; but if he give commandment contrary to God, she is not to obey therein, following the apostle's rule, Acts iv. 19, 'It is better to obey God than man.'

Then, ver. 19, he setteth down the duty of husbands. And howsoever there are many duties enjoined there, yet the principal duty the apostle requireth is love, because men are usually short and cold in that affection. Indeed, in the affection and love for fornication they will be oftentimes exceeding hot, but in this true love are far short and too strait-laced.

The apostle setteth forth this affection of a man in Eph. v. 28, saying that he should 'love his wife, as his own body,' and the reason is, because she is weaker, 1 Pet. iii. 7, and full of infirmities and weaknesses, and therefore he is to cover them by love, Prov. x. 12. For if he have maims or blemishes in his body, he

will be ready to use all means to hide them; so must the man do to his wife, being his own body.

And the apostle Saint Peter, 1 Pet. iv. 8, sheweth a general duty of love, to cover many infirmities: 'Above all things,' saith he, 'have fervent love, for love shall cover the multitude of sins.' And the

apostle saith further, he is not to be bitter, for love hath no gall in it, and therefore the husband is to exercise his love toward his wife by avoiding all manner of bitterness toward her.

* * The 20th and 21st are handled in the next sermon.

SERMON XXVIII.

Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters, according to the flesh, in all things; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doth wrong, he shall receive for the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons.—COL. III. 22–25.

THE apostle cometh from the general duty belonging to all Christian men, to the particular duties of men in the household; and having spoken of the duties of husbands and wives, and of parents and children, he cometh now to the last couple in the household, of masters and servants. As if he should say,

You servants, from a mind subdued, obey your masters, whose commandment over you is but for a time whilst you are in this frail estate, and that in all things which may stand with the keeping of a good conscience. Now your service must not be alone when your masters stand by and look on, as seeking only to please your masters; but in singleness of heart, as fearing God, whose eye is always upon you when your master's eye is off, ver. 22.

Your service ought also to be voluntary and cheerful, as that which is due to the Lord, who loveth a cheerful giver, and not as unto man, that cannot discern whether it be done frankly, ver. 23.

Knowing that you shall receive in reward from the Lord, life, as an inheritance which he will freely, as upon his children, bestow upon you; for it ought to uphold you in your dutiful service, that you serve not so much your masters, which are but men, and therefore sometimes unthankful and unable to recompense, but the Lord, who is both able and will recompense your well doing, ver. 24.

Remembering on the other side that whatsoever he be that doth wrong, whether master or servant, thereof he shall receive the punishment from the Lord, who accepteth neither the person of the servant to pity him, because of his poor and base estate, nor of the master's to spare him, because of his dignity and high degree, ver. 25.

The sum is, the setting forth of the duty of the last pair and couple in the household, *id est*, of the masters and servants.

But first we are to speak of that which remaineth of the other text, of children and parents.

First, ver. 20, Children are commanded to give obedience to parents. By obedience is meant all duties which children owe to their parents, which are

divers. And first, of a duty which belongeth to all them in the household, husband, wife, parents, children, masters, servants, viz. to pray particularly one for another, and more particularly than for others; for parents, that they are bound to it, we see it in Job, that he prayed for his children, being at feasting, Job i., lest they should let any sin overpass them in their feasting, wherein they might offend. And by the same reason children are bound to pray for their parents; and also by the commandment the subjects are commanded to pray for their princes, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; and so princes to pray for their people, as David doth in sundry psalms, wherein he maketh prayer for himself and his people, 1 Kings xviii. Solomon also doth the like in 2 Chron. vi. 21. But to come to more particular duties of children to their parents: 1, reverence, viz. a special reverence, which they are to carry to their parents above others; secondly, love, a particular love of their parents, in regard also that they are set over them of God. These are inward things. Outward duties are, first, a reverent behaviour in their countenance and carriage towards them, in their words and in their works, to be ready to obey and do those things they are commanded, not contrary to God.

And therefore it is said 'in all things,' viz., not to obey their parents in that which they themselves like, but in all things, though hard and contrary to their own liking, if it be not against the word of God.

And one special duty of obedience, is to bear with all, and cover the infirmities of their parents, as Shem and Japhet did to their father Noah, Gen. ix. 23.

Further, if the parents have need, they are to relieve and maintain their parents, 1 Tim. v. 4, for if the children be able to maintain them, the church is not to be burdened.

Amongst other, a most notable duty is that whereby children are to yield obedience to their parents, in being bestowed by their parents in their occupations and manner of life. And, therefore, we see that Adam bestowed his sons, one in tilling the land, the other in keeping cattle.

But more especially in marriage, they are not to suffer themselves to be bestowed without their parents' consent: where we see the wretched disobedience of children, that will give themselves at their own pleasure, contrary to their parents' consent. And a wretched and foolish peevishness [hath] crept into the hearts of children, that they will take it in great dislike, if their parents be spoken unto before themselves, clean contrary to the example of the Scripture, and even contrary to the practice of heathen and natural men.

As we see Ishmael would not marry, but by his mother's consent, Gen. xviii.; and contrariwise what a heart-breaking was it to Isaac and Rebecca, that Esau married contrary to their consent? So that this is a special duty of children, both sons and daughters, not to marry, or choose their husbands or wives, without their parents' consent. So that their parents do match them so, as may be equal and fit for them, in regard of age, estate, &c.

Whereas if parents force their children, contrary to reason, for gain, &c., they deal wretchedly in that. And as parents are not to force their children, so children are not to disobey their parents, when in age and condition they find out fit matches for them in any sort.

And a reason that parents are to be obeyed of their children, in those things that are good, is because they are obedient also in the same unto the Lord. And we know it is an easy matter, if with one whiting a man may paint two walls, it is more easy for him to paint one. But our obedience, therefore, must be in the Lord, viz., only in those things, only wherein they command according to God. And therefore our Saviour Christ, when his mother bid him change water into wine, John ii., refused; he denied her, because the time was not come. But we may not speak as he spake; for we must, if they command us contrary to the word of God, with all reverence deny to do it, and not in any controlling or snappish fashion.

In that he saith *parents*, he meaneth both father and mother; for children, because the father hath more authority, and because, peradventure, the inheritance lieth upon his disposition, will obey their father, but they care not for their mother.

Howbeit obedience is commanded to both, Exod. x. 12. And howsoever it cometh oftentimes that the children are disobedient by the too much tenderness of the parents, yet the children are not to trust to that, for if they lose their parents' love through their wicked behaviour, they cannot assure themselves of God's.

A foolish son, saith Solomon, doth overthrow his father's estate, and drives away his mother, viz., both overthroweth and driveth away both, and maketh parents that they cannot abide the sight of them.

As the hatred of brethren is strong, because their love, which was great, is broken, so if parents' love, which is far greater, be broken, the hatred will be the more.

The duties of parents are divers: 1. To see the disposition of the children, and according to their fitness to dispose them in this or that calling; specially to bring them up in the fear and information of the Lord, Eph. vi. 4. Secondly, to lay up for their children, 2 Cor. xii. 14.

And further, not to provoke them by indiscreet correction, ver. 21, in not correcting them, according to their sexes and ages, as when they correct their sons and daughters, and all alike: which may provoke them, or give occasion at the least (for children ought to bear it patiently though they be injured), yet they may discourage their children by indiscreet and too hard correction.

And on the other side, parents are to take heed that they kill not their children by too much pampering them, which is oftentimes the cause of the death of their soul and body, as David did his sons, who, when he was loath to displease them, Absalom sought his kingdom, and his life, and defiled his concubines.

Then ho cometh to the next couple, of servants and masters, ver. 22. And servants are commanded to be 'obedient to their masters in the flesh.' So called, first, because they are only for this life, and can reach no further, mitigating the sharpness of service in those times wherein servants were bond-slaves, so that all that was the servants' was the master's.

For otherwise, 1 Cor. vii. 22, the apostle sheweth that servants be 'God's freemen,' as well as the masters, if they be God's children. Secondly, masters of the flesh, because they cannot command their souls, but only their body.

The dutifulness of servants consisteth in two things: first, that it be done with faithfulness, not with eye-service, but as in the presence of God. Secondly, that it be done willingly, and freely, and frankly. For the Lord (2 Cor. ix. 7) loveth a cheerful giver.

And therefore the apostle saith, ver. 23, they must do it, 'as unto God.' Examples we have of Abraham's servant, whose faithfulness we see, who, being sent to fetch a wife for his master's son, when he came to the place fell upon his knees, and prayed, and commanded his business to God, Gen. xxiv. 12. Which teacheth that servants must not only be faithful, but careful, by commanding their business unto God: and therefore they are to pray both for strength and wisdom in their master's business.

Again, we see in him a singular diligence, in that coming to the place, set up the camels, and saw them served, before he would rest, though he was a-weary, and would not eat before he had his answer. And chap. xxxi., in Jacob's faithfulness to Laban, his uncle.

In Jacob, we see his diligence and pains, both in the heat of the day and in frost of the night. And as the greater and weightier the business of his master is, by so much the more he is to commend his business unto the Lord, and ought to be more careful.

A reason the apostle rendereth, that whereas if the

servant have an unkind, or a poor master, that cannot or will not repay, nor recompense his pains, he is thereby made careless, yet the Lord telleth him, that if he be faithful, he is the Lord's servant, ver. 24, and he will reward him with an inheritance, accounting him as a child.

He that doth injury. This is brought as a reason

both to the master and servant, that if the master be injurious unto the servant, the Lord will not spare him, because of his wealth and high estate, because he is above his servant: as earthly judges will oftentimes be partial. Neither will he spare the injurious servant, because of pity to his poverty and inferiority.

SERMON XXIX.

*Ye masters, do unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.—
COL. IV. 1.*

YOU masters, look that you yield unto your servants both wages, and meat, and drink, as that which is right; and with moderate rest and recreation, some further recompense, according to the good service they have done, as that which is equal; considering that as your servants are to render an account unto you, so you must give an account unto your Master which is in heaven.

The duty of masters is, first, to do justly, viz., that they give that which they agree upon according to the law in regard of their wages.

Secondly, that they deal equally towards them, viz., with consideration besides.

And therefore it is requisite that the master account the servant in some sort as a child, and in that regard to carry an equal hand to him as to his child, and to love him. And therefore we see that Naaman's servant called his master father, 2 Kings v. 13.

And Joshua, being a magistrate, called Achan, though a thief, son, Josh. vii. 19. Such affection is required of masters and servants one to another: the master should rule and command as a father, and the servant is to be dutiful as to a father.

By that which is equal, therefore, is meant all things meet, besides their meat, drink, and apparel (which is of their bargain), but especially for their instruction, that they be taught and instructed in the will of God; and therefore ought they to have liberty both to go to the public service of God, especially on the Lord's day, and also that they have, beside, some time for honest recreations.

And therefore better it is to be many men's horses or oxen than their servants; for to their oxen they will give meat for their work. But peradventure to servants they will deny that, and especially will have little regard that they serve God, for they will hardly spare them so long from their drudgery.

Furthermore, according to their servants' faithfulness, and as they have profited their master by their service, so ought they to reward them, Deut. xv. 14. For it may be that the master's life may be saved by his servant, and therefore, accordingly, he is to have regard unto him.

And therefore in that place of Deuteronomy, howbeit a stranger might be kept as a servant all his life, yet the Jews are commanded, that if one of their brethren, i.e., one of the twelve tribes, if he were a servant, he should go out free at the end of seven years, at which time his master is commanded to give him of his wine, and of his oil and corn, and of what God did bless him with, for that he hath been a means whereby that hath been increased. Even so masters are taught, that according as God hath blessed and enriched them by the labour and means of their servant, so they are to recompense them, over and above their wages. It followeth,—

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; praying also for us, that God may open unto us the door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, wherefor I am also in bonds; that I may utter it, as it becometh me to speak. Walk wisely toward them that are without, and redeem the time. Let your speech be gracious always, and powdered with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man.—Ver. 2-6.

We have heard of general duties to all men, and particular to some sorts. Now he cometh to a third kind of duties, which is of another sort, as it were compounded of both, being partly general, and belonging to all others, partly particular, which did after a more particular sort belong unto them, viz., prayer and thanksgiving, &c. As if the apostle should thus speak.

And now to return again to the general duties, and yet such as for the most part belong rather unto you than unto other persons and churches not so stated or affected as yours, I exhort you to take pains, and to continue in petitions and requests unto God, with heed taken that it be not done carelessly and drowsily; the which both with continuance, painfulness, and watching, must be done and performed in thanksgiving for graces already received, ver. 2.

Praying in both sorts, as for all men, and the faithful above others, so especially for me and Timothy, that God would open our mouths wide, as a gate, otherwise shut, is set open, that we may speak the

secrets of Christ, naturally hidden from all men, and by dispensation of God always to the coming of Christ, obscurely known to the faithful, yea, to the angels themselves, for which I am in hold, ver. 3.

In which respect you are yet further to strengthen and stretch out your prayers for me, that, all fear set apart, I may make it manifest, as it is meet, both in regard of the excellency thereof, and the special trust of the apostleship which is committed unto me, ver. 4.

And seeing you dwell amongst those that are strangers from God, walk wisely, that you be neither infected with their evils, nor they have occasion to speak evil of the truth, and that, by the light of your godly conversation, they may be allure to give ear to the truth, therein following the example of diligent merchants, that, to redeem their losses that are past, watch to take all opportunity of gaining, ver. 5.

Moro particularly look to your speeches, in the wise ordering whereof Christian wisdom is singularly discerned, that it be always, as savoury meat, well seasoned, whilst you shall be able to answer every man according as their particular estates require, ver. 6.

The sum is an exhortation unto certain Christian duties, especially concerning the Colossians, though belonging also to all Christians.

First, a duty towards God, viz., prayer.

Secondly, towards men, how to carry themselves, whether within or without the church.

For prayer in general, we are to consider that it consists of two parts, petition and thanksgiving, and therefore by prayer ho only meaneth here petition and suit unto God, because of the other part, viz., thanksgiving, he after exhorts them to.

Concerning prayer, the excellency of it is not here to be spoken of, as that it is a key to open all God's treasures, &c.

But we are to consider that which the apostle speaketh of here, viz., exhorting them to continue and to be watchful unto prayer, by which both continuance and fervency in prayer are understood. For continuance in prayer, it is the same as to pray always, as the apostle requireth in another place, when he saith, pray continually, 1 Thes. v. 17. It is not meant that one should do nothing but pray, for then we should not eat nor sleep; but he meaneth that we ought to keep a steady and continued course of prayer, not only publicly, but privately, and particularly in our closets; for we have not only general, but particular matters to pray for, which concern ourselves particularly.

And the apostle saith that men are to continue this ordinary course of private prayer; for many will begin, but will soon be a-weary of it. And therefore he meaneth that the ordinary course, which we see used to be three times a day ordinarily, is not to be let off. And therefore it is called the ordinary sacrifice, which was only in the morning and the evening offered, yet called the continual sacrifice, Exod. xxix. 38, 40, 41, because it was continually offered every day.

Secondly, In that he saith, '*watch unto prayers*', he neteth that it must be a fervent, not a drowsy, prayer, and we must keep our minds close unto God, that they do not wander abroad; and that it be done with earnestness, not drowsiness, which is oft turned into sin; which cometh either from the cares of this life, or from sorrow; as the disciples, when our Saviour exhorted them to pray, they by sorrow for his departure were overcome with sleep, Luke xxii. 45.

But, furthermore, as we are to ask in prayer, so we are to return unto the Lord in thanksgiving, contrary to the custom of men that are watchful enough to ask, but return not with thanks; and a general fault it is that we are long in our petitions, and short in our thanksgiving.

This corruption we see in the nine lepers, Luke xvii. 17, 18, that were earnest in their petitions unto Christ, but forgot to give thanks, when they had received their desires.

But the apostle exhorts us to be as watchful to thanksgiving, as to petition, contrary to our corrupt nature.

And seeing by reason of the benefits of God we want, and our great wants, we have need to ask supply of God. So is there none of us, but we have received many and ample blessings of God; and therefore have as just cause to return him thanks.

But many men have their eye all upon their wants, that they will never look upon the graces and blessings of God, bestowed on them, whereof they are forgetful.

And as many are faulty in this, so therero are more which are guilty of this fault, as to think all is well with them, and therefore cry, 'Peace, peace,' to themselves, thinking they have need of no more grace of God; and therefore neglect to cry and sue unto God earnestly for further graces and mercies. And as it is a general sin, in regard of men's particular estate, so also in regard of the general estate of the church. This is a general sin, that men forget to pray for things she needs, and to give thanks for favours shewed her.

And many there are, who have their eyes still upon the wants and blemishes of the church, and are still crying out upon them; and because of that, are never thankful unto God for those mercies that God hath bestowed upon the church, as the word and sacraments, which they may freely come unto in peace; yet they say, that all is but as popery, so unthankful unto God are they for these mercies, contemning them as nothing, because they want those which are also convenient.

Another sort of people in the church there are, that seeing themselves better than other churches, in other places, content themselves with their estate which they have, as though there could be no amendment, nor removal of those corruptions which are yet remaining; whereas yet there ought to be this care in every

one of us, that as we ought to be thankful for the mercies God giveth unto the church, which are to be thanked for, so further, we being not ourselves by our place able to reform the wants, yet ought we to go to the Lord for redress.

And the magistrates especially are to labour for the reformation, according to the word of God, of those things that are amiss. And thus much of prayer in general.

Then he cometh to exhort them to pray particularly for them which were ministers, verse 3. Indeed, prayer is a principal duty, which a man can perform unto others; which duty we owe to all men, but especially to those which are over us, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; as the magistrates, though evil, much more if they be religious. And as for others, so for the ministers, we are to be careful to pray for them, because the Lord hath set them to be the special means of his glory in the ministry of his word, wherein they advance the kingdom of Christ. Again, they are the means of our calling, by delivering the word of God for us; and therefore they are the ordinary means of our salvation.

Again, they are to be prayed for, because in their fall the devil's kingdom is exalted; and contrariwise, by their standing the devil's fall is procured, and the kingdom of God advanced. And we are to pray for them, that they may both teach, admonish, comfort, and exhort, and reprove us for our good.

And the apostle teacheth them the cause why they should pray for him, viz., that he may be loosed, viz., seeing now he was in prison, and could not preach, as beforetime, indeed being bound, yet 'the word was not bound,' for he laboured by letters and epistles, which he sent abroad to this city and that city; and therefore he wills them to pray that he may have free liberty to speak, and therefore compares the opening of his mouth to a door, that it may be thoroughly opened, to preach the whole will of God to all men freely, without any flattery or restraint. And he giveth a reason that they should pray for the opening of their mouths,* because it is a mystery, signifying that the gospel is a hid thing, a thing hid from the wit and reason of men; for howsoever the knowledge that there is a God, and the creation, be no mysteries, because

* Qu. 'his mouth'?—ED.

every one hath that knowledge naturally in him, though the atheists would gladly put out that light, yet the redemption by our Saviour Christ is a mystery, hid from the reason of men and angels before it was revealed. Again, it is a mystery, because in a sort it was hid from the Jews, before the coming of Christ, being not so plainly known as afterward. And seeing it is a secret of God, we ought to desire to have it opened, as men will be desirous to know the secret counsels of a prince when they are published.

And he saith further, ver. 4, that they pray that he may speak as he ought to speak; which is in matter and in manner.

Matter, that he may teach the truth of God, and all the truth of God, as the apostle saith to the Ephesians.

Secondly, that he may preach that that is profitable, and therefore not those things that tend to breed contentions.

Thirdly, men ought not only to pray that the minister speak truth, and that profitable truth, but those things especially which the people have most need of; for some things are more needful for one people than for another.

The *manner*, that it be done with the love of God sincerely, and with the love of the people, and desire of their good; and that it be done, not with the fear of any man, or pleasing any, nor of envy, malice, nor any other evil affection and boiling of heart, but as the apostle Peter saith, 1 Peter iv. 11, 'Let him that speaketh, speak as the words and oracles of God.' Thus much of the duty to God.

Towards men, he exhortheth to duties also, ver. 5, for he saith, 'Walk wisely towards them that are without.' In the epistle to the Ephesians, chap. v. 15, he useth the self-same words, but there generally towards all men; but here he useth it particularly, to walk wisely, 'to those that were without.' For besides Christians, there were in this city heathen men uncalled, and Jews, which held of their ceremonics; and therefore the apostle willetteth them to walk wisely, because the corruption of men is ready to catch anything against the gospel, by the professors of it, speaking ill of it, if they spy evil in them. And also error is like to a canker, that if it begin, it spreadeth further, and corrupteth as it goeth, 2 Tim. ii. 15.

SERMON XXX.

Tychicus, our beloved brother, and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord, shall declare unto you my whole state: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your state, and might comfort your hearts; with Onesimus, a faithful and a beloved brother, who is one of you: they shall shew you of all things here. Aristarchus my prison-fellow saluteth you, and Marcus, Barnabas's sister's son (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him); and Jesus, which is called Justus, which are of the circumcision. These only are my work-fellows unto the kingdom of God, which have been unto my consolation.—COL. IV. 7-11.

WE have heard how the apostle, having first admonished and taught of the things belonging to

all Christians, proceeded to those things which belonged to every particular estate of Christians. And

now he shutteth up his epistle with certain other things, which are neither general nor particular, but of a middle sort.

In the love and care I bear unto you, I have sent Tychicus unto you, who shall inform you of all my estate, whereof I know you will be glad to hear: whom that you may receive as it becometh, I command unto you for a brother, worthy to be beloved; also for a faithful minister, and my fellow in the Lord's service, ver. 7.

Whom I have sent, as to let you understand of mine affairs, so to know what ease you are in, thereof to make report unto me, and especially that he may comfort you at the heart, against the storm of persecution raised against you, ver. 8.

And with him, that the embassage may have more authority, and that in the mouth of two witnesses the things concerning you or me may be better assured, I sent Onesimus, a brother, both faithful and worthy to be beloved, howsoever he hath slipped in time past, who is also one of the members of the same church; these two shall give you to understand of all things that may concern you, that are done in those parts, ver. 9.

Aristarchus in love saluteth you.

So doth Mark and Jesus, whom that you may be provoked to love again, I would have you to understand, that touching Aristarchus, he is my fellow-prisoner for the gospel; touching Mark, he is sister's son to Barnabas, that notable servant of God, of whom you have had commandment, that if he come unto you, you should receive him accordingly, ver. 10.

And touching Jesns, his conversation hath been such as whereby he hath gotten the surname of *Just*. And of them all three together, there are great causes why you should respect them, for that they are of the race of the Jews, with whom God hath made special covenant, especially seeing that of so great a number of Jews that are here, only these three help to advance the kingdom of heaven by giving assistance unto me, ver. 11.

The sum of all which, as well of this as of that that followeth to the end of the epistle, is to give to understand their mutual estate, as well his to them as theirs to him, together with certain salutations from some, and to some.

But, first, we are to speak of that in the former text, ver. 5, which remaineth to be handled, wherein the apostle had exhorted them to walk wisely and warily. One sort of wisdom is that they be not infected by the pitch and canker of the naughty corruption of the wicked.

Secondly, That they so walk towards the strangers, that they give no occasion to them to speak evil of the gospel, and that by their godly conversation those without may be called to the truth.

And it is necessary that, dwelling among wicked men, we should walk warily and wisely, that we be not

corrupted by them, because by reason of the infection remaining in us, we are as ready to take infection from others, as the tinder to take fire.

Which how dangerous it is, we read in the example of divers of the notable servants of God; as of Lot, who by covetousness choosing to live in the fattest country of Sodom, learned there to be drunken, with which he was overtaken by his daughters, Gen. xix.

And Joseph himself, though a notable young man, as the like was not in those days, yet in the court of Pharaoh learned to court it and dissemble, and swear fearfully by the life of Pharaoh, Gen. xlvi. 15. And therefore much more ought we to take heed of this infection.

Another cause why we should take heed of walking wisely, is because the wicked will be ready to take all occasions of speaking evil of us. And the occasions are divers, that the infidels will have regard unto; as in the 1 Thes. iv. 11, the apostle bids them to walk quietly, not to be troublesome; for they will mark, if we be such as be busy to meddle in other men's matters, and therefore we ought to be aware of that; which without wisdom we cannot avoid.

Again, they will mark whether men be laborious in their vocation, that they labour with their own hands; therefore the apostle bids us work with our own hands, 1 Thes. iv. 11. For it is a shame that we by idleness should be constrained to beg at their doors, which will be a cause to make them blame our religion.

Thirdly, Another cause why we should walk wisely is to the end that we might call them to repentance by our godly conversation, 2 Peter ii. 12, and iii. 1, 2, having care especially to be wary in those things, which the adversaries of the gospel have by the light of nature a special insight in, else we shall be a great offence unto them. Lastly, that men that speak ill of us might be ashamed, 1 Peter iii. 16.

After the apostle exhorteth to another matter, that we redeem the time, ver. 5; the word signifieth an opportunity of time and fitness. Wherewithal the apostle draweth from the practice of merchants, that having had any great loss, they will watch all markets and opportunities to recover that loss which they have had, and to make up the breach they have made in their substance, so are we to watch to recover that we have lost, by taking all good opportunity.

And we are to do as the wayfaring man, that having slept too long, or been too long at dinner, will make the more haste after. So ought we to consider how in our lifetime we have spent the time lent us by God, and wherein we have been behind-hand in the service of God. That whereas if our life were a thousand years (as none never came unto, which yet is but a moment to the life to come), it were too little to spend in the service of God. And therefore if any of it hath not been so spent, we are to be careful to endeavour ourselves according as the apostle Peter exhorts us,

that if we have spent the time in drunkenness, gluttony, lusts, wantonness, we should now leave.

Redeeming the time, signifying that if possible we can we are to buy it out, and to buy it out even with much money, nay, with our life itself, if need be.

And therefore it sheweth the notable corruption of us, that the time which we ought to redeem and buy out by much cost, we are so careless of it that we spend it in our worldly gains and pleasures. And therefore we see how men spend and pass the time in cards and dice, and other vanities. We see our Saviour Christ, Luke xiv., being on the Sabbath called to a feast, see how he redeemeth the time. First, seeing them strive for high places, he there taketh occasion to tell them a notable doctrine, not to exalt themselves; and again he counsels them to bid the poor.

And further, upon the speech of a man which said, 'Blessed is he that eateth bread in the kingdom of God,' he propounded a parable to instruct them therein, Luke xiv. 15, Mat. xxii. 2.

Another notable example of our Saviour Christ, that redeemed the time, we see in his taking occasion with the poor woman, which was an harlot, to call her, John iv. And after, with the disciples, on seeing the harvest, taketh occasion to give a notable speech to his disciples to pray unto the Lord to send forth reapers into his spiritual harvest, Mat. ix. 37, Luke x. 2, which teacheth us to redeem, and take all good occasions of speaking and doing good things, contrary to the wretched practice of filthy persons, that take all occasions of filthy speeches and deeds, as of Herodias against John Baptist, Mark vi. 23, 24.

After he cometh to a notable doctrine about the tongue, ver. 6, that in regard of their godly conversation to the infidels they should have special regard to use their tongues well. For it is as a rudder of a ship, or fire, that being well used is profitable; if otherwise, dangerous. And he will have them to order their tongues wisely, that their speech be seasoned, viz., that they know when to speak, when to be silent; and in speaking, that they know how to speak according to the persons present, so to direct the speech according as is most fit for every one's condition and estate. Which, as it is requisite in the minister, so in all men; therefore the apostle, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, wills Timothy to admonish an old man, as it becometh a father, and the young men as brethren; and Solomon saith, Prov. xxvi. 4, 'Answer not a fool according to his folly,' viz., in words and babbling; for that will breed further babbling without end. And yet answer him in his folly, ver. 5, to stop his mouth, meaning according as is most fit for to be answered unto him, 'lest he be wise in his own conceit.'

In this text the apostle sendeth these messengers to understand the estate of the church, and to signify their estate; and further, for mutual comfort, and to strengthen the church; he therefore sendeth these worthy men, Tychicus and Onesimus, ver. 7, 8.

Doct. Here we learn that it is a necessary duty for the minister to know the estate of his flock, and for the flock to know the estate of the minister; for the minister it is necessary that he know. For as a good shepherd will know the estate of his flock, Prov. xxvii. 27, so ought the minister of his spiritual charge, that he may accordingly lay forth unto them his admonitions, exhortations, and may command them in their wants unto God.

The people are to understand the state of the minister, not to the end to pry out his faults to have matter to accuse him, as the custom is now, but to the end they admonish him, if he be faulty, as after shall appear in the end of this epistle.

Secondly, That if there be any such want, they may the more commend their minister unto God to have supply for their instruction.

So is the minister also to do for the people, and so is the duty of every Christian to inquire of the state of the churches, and of the ministers in all places, to the end that for the good we may be thankful unto God, for any evil we may be earnest unto God in prayer.

Men, for the end their merchandise may prosper, will be inquisitive of the state of the place, and of the traffic; much more ought we to be of the churches of God. And therefore we see an example in Nehemiah, chap. i. 2, 5, 6, that when ambassadors came unto the king out of his country, he was inquisitive of their estate, and went unto the Lord in prayer, in regard of their great afflictions; so ought we to do.

Here, also, we see the great love of the apostle, that parteth with Onesimus, ver. 9, which (as is in the epistle to Philemon, ver. 11), had been unthrifly, but was now very profitable unto the apostle; and therefore writeth to Philemon, that if he would receive him he should, yet he was very profitable unto him. And notwithstanding he sendeth him to the Colossians, and spareth him from himself, which was much more to spare Tychicus, which was a minister.

Doct. Whereby ministers are taught to depart from their own profit for the good of the church.

After the apostle sendeth salutations of divers, but of three especially, Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus, to testify their love to the Colossians, ver. 10.

Doct. The duty of ministers is not to disgrace one another, but to commend and praise the good things in their fellow-ministers to the church, that they may nourish and increase the good opinion which the church hath of them, to the furthering of their ministries.

These three he especially commendeth to be chiefly accounted of by them, in regard of the things common to them all, as, namely, they were of the circumcision, being of the Jews, and yet continued constant unto the truth. Then that they were fellow-labourers with him in the ministry, and that they were very comfortable unto him, abiding and staying with [him] in his persecution.

Particularly he commendeth Aristarchus unto them, for that he was his fellow-prisoner, sustaining the same bonds with him ; Jesus he commendeth to be such a one, as that by his godly conversation had gotten this good report amongst the children of God, that he was surnamed *Just*.

And Mark he commands, for that he was the sister's son of Barnabas, a worthy man, and an apostle, and therefore worthy to be accounted of by them, and well entertained if he should come unto them. Where we may see what was the cause of the falling out of Paul and Barnabas was, why Barnabas took Mark's part, whenas Mark having fainted by the way, by

reason of the hot persecution, Acts xv. 39, 40, Paul refused to take him with him, whereas Barnabas was earnest to have Mark ; but it seemeth that in the controversy Barnabas was in fault, in that the church joined with Paul against Barnabas, who as it is likely was too much carried away with affection.

Howbeit we see here that Mark having (as we may well gather) confessed his fault, and professed his repentance, and reconciled himself to the apostle Paul, was received again of him. Where we see the tender love of the apostle, who upon testimony of his repentance receiveth him and loveth him again, after that he had begun to slip and start aside.

SERMON XXXI.

Epaphras the servant of Christ, which is one of you, saluteth you, and always strieth for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and full in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and for them of Laodicea, and them of Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, greeteth you, and Demas. Salute the brethren which are of Laodicea, and Nympha, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read of you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also ; and that ye likewise read the epistle written from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry that thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.—COL. IV. 12-18.

WE have entered upon the salutations sent from Paul, and from those that were at Rome with him, to the Colossians. And the apostle doth here proceed in that matter, as if he should say after this sort :

Epaphras saluteth you, between whom and you there is a special bond, by reason whereof even now being absent from you, yet he is one of you, and being as you know a worthy servant of Christ in the ministry of the gospel, whereby his prayers are more effectual, he prayeth continually with great strife and earnestness for you ; that having entered into the holy profession of the gospel, you may stand and abide in it, with daily increase both in the knowledge and obedience of the whole will of God, until such time as by death you shall be complete and perfect men in Christ, ver. 12.

For howsoever I am not privy to his private prayers, yet I dare be bold so to write, because myself am witness how (notwithstanding his absence) he burneth in much love towards you, and towards the brethren in Laodicea and Hierapolis, the rather for your sakes, which may either be furthered by their good, or hindered by their ill estate, ver. 13.

Luke, the physician, one worthy to be beloved, saluteth you, and so doth Demas, ver. 14.

Salute the brethren in Laodicea from me, especially Nympha and his family, which, for their piety and good order in it, I may not unfitly term a little church, ver. 15.

And when you have read this epistle in the church, to testify your communion, as in all other good things, so especially in this sacred treasure of the word of

Christ, procure it to be read in the church of Laodicea : as of the other side, that you also read the epistle which was written from Laodicea, ver. 16.

Tell also Archippus your pastor and ordinary minister from me, that he look more diligently to his charge of ministry, which he hath received of the Lord ; that he do it not by halves, but that he perform it in every respect, both of cheerful teaching and of good example of life unto the flock, ver. 17.

Finally, I have sent you also my salutations, not by the hand of my scribe (as the other salutations), but by mine own hand ; whereunto (for a close of my letters) I add my request unto you, that you would in your prayers remember my bonds, for the obtaining of whatsoever my captive estate doth require.

And further, my humble prayer is for the grace of God to be with you ; and so I am assured that it will be, ver. 18.

Herein we are to consider of the salutations, and, secondly, of certain commandments given.

For the salutations, they are those which he sendeth from them that are with him, and such salutations as he sendeth by them unto the church of Laodicea.

There remaineth the verse before, ver. 11, to be spoken of. For having spoken of Aristarchus, Mark, &c., he giveth every one their general commendation. And touching Jesus, he giveth him this commendation, that he was a just man, that by his upright dealing and carriage towards all men he had gotten this name to be called *Just*. As we usually call him that walketh honestly *le bonne homme*, a good man, an example hereof we have in Acts i. of Barsabas, one of them

which stood in election for the place of Judas. This Barsabas had gotten his name to be called Just, Acts i. 23, and had it given him by the church. For as is in Acts iv. 36, 47, the church being in great affliction, he sold that which he had, and distributed it amongst the church, whereupon they give him that name Barnabas, the 'son of consolation,' because of the comfort he was to many in the church.* This sheweth the miserable times now-a-days, wherein few just men are found, and therefore we had need to have a greater light than of the noonday, to find such an one, or one that dealeth so justly that one may bargain with him in the dark, whereas we ought to be more just, having so plentiful means of knowledge of the gospel. And what a shame is it that so few there are which can have the name of Barnabas, the son of comfort ?

Again, in the name of this man called *Jesus*, we see a notable abuse of the papists of this name *Jesus*, that whosoever it was named would make courtesy in token of reverence, whereupon ariseth many absurdities. For, first, they make an inequality in the Trinity, not giving that reverence to the names of the other persons.

Again, what a shame is it for them, that if it be such a necessary duty, why use they not that reverence to the name of Christ in the markets and in the houses ?

Further, such was their ignorance, that if this name of this man *Jesus*, which is the same in Greek that Jehovah in Hebrew, they would, when they heard it, do worship to it, which were an horrible idolatry, to give the worship to the name of a man, which though a good man, yet a sinner.

Then he commends them altogether, that they were Jews, giving great honour to them thereby. By which we see it is an honour to be a Jew, which condemneth the wretched practice amongst us, that hate the Jews ; and when any disgrace is given to any most vile, we will say, hate him as a Jew. And yet we see our Saviour Christ saith, John iv. 22, 'salvation is from the Jews.' And from whence were all the apostles but of the Jews ? Yea, the chief apostle of the Gentiles, the apostle Paul himself, yea, our Saviour Christ himself, was of the Jews, and therefore why should we so hate them ? And consider that before they were rejected, and before the Gentiles were called, how oft have we in the prophets, that they prayed for us before we were called ? And in the last of the Canticles, 'we have a little sister,' Cant. viii. 8, and therefore a shame for us so to hate and contemn them.

And further consider that they have a promise, Rom. xi., that they shall be gathered to the church, which no other nation have, therefore ought to be loved, and prayed for of us.

He further commendeth these, ver. 11, that they

* Barsabas seems here to be confounded with Barnabas.—ED.

only of the circumcision there at Rome were helpers unto the kingdom of God, which was a notable commendation unto them, for that God vonchsafered them, which were men, to be helpers to his kingdom ; as it is a great honour for a subject to be counted a defender of the prince, as the prince's champion.

And here we learn, in that our apostle commended them, being so few, and that because they were so few, that helped him, therefore we are to learn that, if any of the Jews be called to the gospel (as some are now), they are so much the more to be esteemed and commended, though but few. Then he shewed wherein they were helpers to the kingdom of God, viz., in that they were comforters to him, which was a chief apostle; which was a notable commendation unto them, to be helpers unto him, that had a great sway of doing good in the church. But a greater commendation to help one in such a great place, than a thousand beside. As he, that defendeth the king, doth more than to defend many others. And therefore when David would have gone with his army divided into three bands against Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 2, 3, they would not let him, alleging to him that he was worth ten thousand of them.

Then he proceeds, ver. 12, to set down Ephaphras his commendations unto them. And he sendeth his commendation, describing him to be of them, one that had planted the gospel with them, and with the Laodiceans ; which was a minister, not as now they are, but an evangelist.

And he saith that Epaphras prayeth for them, commanding his prayer in that he was the servant of God, to wit, a prophet and minister, and therefore his prayer more excellent and effectual than of a private man. As the Lord saith to Abimelech, which would have defiled Abraham's wife, the Lord forbids him, laying a curse upon his house, but bids him restore her, and he shall pray for him ; for he was a prophet, Gen. xx. 7.

And the matter of his prayer he setteth down to be, 1, that they may continue unto the end without any slacking or starting back ; 2, that they may be increased in grace, until they should be accomplished in the end, which should not be perfected before they were dissolved.

And further, ver. 13, he doth testify his zeal and care towards them, and mindfulness of them, which himself was an eye-witness of, though not of his private prayer. After, ver. 14, he sendeth salutations of Luke, viz., the physician (not the evangelist, for then he would have given him that title), and he sheweth that this man is to be loved, because of the good to the church in his skill of physic.

Demas his salutation he setteth down, but giveth him no commendation, because that (as it seemeth) he began now to slide away, which after he did shamefully. Then after this, ver. 15, he desireth them to remember his salutations to the church of

Laodicea : where we learn, as in all the other salutations, so in this, that it is a necessary duty to send salutations to our friends, especially to those of the church which profess the truth.

And amongst this church, he commends himself to one Nymphas, ver. 15, and to his house, which by reason of the good order and government in his whole house, might be called a little church. For in his house there was obedience of wife, children, servants, &c. Where he sheweth what a notable mercy of God it is when a family is well ordered and governed, that all the family joined together in their duties to God, and one to another ; and therefore this commendation by this epistle of this man remaineth to the end of the world ; and therefore sheweth what an excellent commendation it is that the household join together in singing unto God, and in other religious duties ; and therefore sheweth our great infidelity, that are so careless of this duty, looking not for the blessing of God, which he hath promised. But if for one person, as for one Joseph in Potiphar's house, the whole house was blessed, for one Jacob Laban blessed, and for ten thousand good men Sodom had been spared, Gen. xviii. 32, then when husband, wife, children, and all are religious, when those that command, command aright, and those that obey, do it as they ought, observing their duties in their place and order, there must needs be a great blessing of God upon that whole family, and upon every one in the same.

After he willeth, ver. 16, that this epistle be read unto the church of Laodicea, as that which not only belonged to them, but unto the whole church of God, being the word of God ; for the word of God (as one saith) is the epistle of God to his creatures. Which teacheth us that this belongs not only unto them to whom it was sent, but also unto us. And in that he

commandeth it to be read, we have therein (if there were no other place) a manifest and plain conformation of the public reading of the word in the church.

Then, ver. 17, he willeth them to warn Archippus (which was their minister) to fulfil the ministry which he had received of the Lord : where he seemeth to reprehend him of some slackness, and negligence in executing the duty of the ministry ; where we learn that it is the duty of the minister to be careful and diligent in the ministry which the Lord hath called him unto, and that he fulfil the work committed unto him, and therefore must labour to increase in knowledge, using the means, that he may be more and more able to be of use unto the church of God ; for as the prophet Jeremiah saith, chap. xlvi. 10, 'Cursed are all they that do the work of the Lord negligently ;' which, howsoever thereto it is spoken of the magistrate, yet it belongeth as much also unto the minister.

Then doing his own salutations, ver. 18, unto them, he desireth them to be mindful of him in his bonds and persecution, which afterward he suffered death in ; which we have heard of before, which teacheth us to be mindful of all that are in bonds for the truth's sake, so especially of the ministers.

Lastly, he commendeth them unto the grace of God, desiring the gracious favour and blessing of God upon them ;

And saith *Amen*, assuring himself of the grace and favour of God towards them, that God would hear his prayer for them, and shew his favour towards them. And thus much of this epistle, wherein we have heard the preface and the epistle itself, in which the apostle persuades them unto a constant embracing of the pure doctrine of Christ Jesus, without the mixture of man's inventions.

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